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Regional Agrarian Organisations and Policy Influence in South America and West Africa

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies of the
University of Sussex

Institute of Development Studies
University of Sussex
31 March 2021

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form to this or any other University for a degree.

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This thesis comparatively examines two prominent contemporary regional agrarian organisations, the Confederation of Family Producers of MERCOSUR (COPROFAM) in South America, and the Network of Peasants and Agricultural Producer Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA). It interrogates their capacity to influence land, labour, and trade policies through their leaders' participation in multiscalar policy dialogues across each region with government officials, academic researchers, and international organisation staff. I identify and analyse their policy claims and negotiated outcomes in policy processes spanning the last three decades. Using a threefold analytical framework (subjective representation, intersubjective negotiation, objective reality) of policy spaces, I examine claims based on their capacity to aggregate diverse rural labouring classes' interests, across three territorial scales (regional, national, local). Agrarian organisations' policy discursive frames are traced throughout their representation and negotiation processes. I argue that regional policy processes on land, labour, and trade show contrasting capacities of agrarian organisations in their efforts to unite different class fractions and territorial constituencies around key discursive frames. Relative gains in each area reveal how regional policy influence is enabled by planks combining interests of diverse rural labouring class fractions (e.g. small-scale peasants, middle farmers, traditional communities) across various types of agrarian territories (e.g. dryland, tropical, temperate). Whether enshrined in regional norms (labour in South America, trade in West Africa) or only national laws (land in both regions), policy processes negotiated in tandem at three contiguous scales have allowed for the emergence of alternatives to global dominant policy discourse. The thesis concludes that COPROFAM and ROPPA's relative influence on land, labour, and trade policies points towards possible paths to expand gains for peasant family farmers and reclaim regional integration for articulated development strategies in the Global South.

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List of Acronyms

ACP: Africa Caribbean Pacific
 ADB: African Development Bank
 AFA: Asian Farmers Association
 AFPA: *Association pour la formation des paysans africains* (Association for the Training of African Peasants)
 AIA: African Industrial Association
 AJAC: *Association des jeunes agriculteurs de Casamance* (Casamance Association of Young Farmers)
 AO: Agrarian Organisation
 AOF: *Afrique Occidentale Française* (French West Africa)
 AOPP: *Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes* (Association of Professional Peasant Organisations)
 APCR: *Association des Présidents des Conseils Ruraux* (Association of Rural Council Presidents)
 APSS: *Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage au Sahel et en Savane* (Association for the promotion of Pastoralism in the Sahel and Savannah)
 APIBANA: African Pineapples and Bananas Association
 APFR: *Attestation de Possession Foncière Rurale* (Rural Land Tenure Possession Certificate)
 ARCN: *Association des Radios Clubs du Niger* (Niger Radio Clubs Association)
 ARU: *Asociación Rural de Uruguay* (Uruguay Rural Association)
 ASECAW: *Association socio-éducative, sportive, et culturelle de l'amicale du Walo* (Walo Friends' Socio-Educational, Sports, and Cultural Association)
 ASIP: Agricultural Structural Investment Programme
 ASPRODEB: *Association Sénégalaise pour la Promotion du Développement à la Base* (Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Development at the Base)
 AV: *Associations Villageoises* (Village Associations)
 BACEN: Brazilian Central Bank
 CAADP: Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
 CAN: *Confederação Nacional da Agricultura* (*National Confederation of Agriculture*)
 CAP: Common Agricultural Policy
 CCAF: Consultative Committee for Agriculture and Food
 CCP: *Confederación Campesina del Perú* (Peasants Confederation of Peru)
 CCSCS: *Coordinadora de Centrales Sindicales del Cono Sur* (Co-ordination of Union Centrals in the Southern Cone)
 CCT: *Central Cristiana de Trabajadores* (Christian Workers' Union)
 CEB: *Comunidades Eclesiais de Base* (Church Base Communities)
 CER: *Centres d'Expansion Rurale* (Rural Extension Centres)
 CESAO: *Centre d'Études Sociales et Économiques d'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Centre for Social and Economic Studies of West Africa)
 CET: Common External Tariff
 CFS: UN Committee on World Food Security
 CFDT: *Compagnie Française de Développement des Textiles* (*French Textile Development Company*)

CILSS: Comité Permanent Inter-états de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (*Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel*)

CIOEC: *Coordinadora de Integración de Organizaciones Económicas Campesinas de Bolivia* (Integrating Coordination of Peasant Economic Organisations of Bolivia)

CLAEH: *Centro Latino-Americano de Economía Humana* (Latin American Centre for Human Economy)

CLOC: *Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo* (Latin American Coordination of Rural Organisations)

CLT: *Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho* (Consolidation of Labour Laws)

CMDR: *Conselho Municipal de Desenvolvimento Rural* (Municipal Council for Rural Development)

CMC: *Consejo del Mercado Común* (Common Market Council)

CMDT: *Compagnie Malienne de Développement des Textiles* (Malian Company for Textile Development)

CNBB: *Confederação Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil* (National Bishops Confederation of Brazil)

CNCR: *Comité National de Concertation des Ruraux* (Rurals' National Concertation Committee)

CNFR: *Comisión Nacional de Fomento Rural* (National Commission for Rural Promotion)

CNRF: *Commission Nationale de Réforme Foncière* (National Land Reform Commission)

CNOP: *Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes* (National Coordination of Peasant Organisations)

CONSEA: *Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional* (National Committee on Food and Nutrition Security)

CONASUR: *Consejo Consultivo de Cooperación Agrícola de los Países del Area Sur* (Consultative Council for Agricultural Cooperation of the Southern Area Countries)

CONDRAF: *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentável* (National Committee on Sustainable Rural Development)

CONTAG: *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura* (National Confederation of Workers in Agriculture)

CONTRAF: *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras na Agricultura Familiar* (National Confederation of Workers in Family Farming)

COPROFAM: *Confederación de Organizaciones de Productores Familiares del MERCOSUR Ampliado* (*Confederation of Organisations of Family Producers of Wider MERCOSUR*)

CPF: *Confédération Paysanne du Faso* (Faso Peasant Confederation)

CRAD: *Centres Régionaux d'Assistance au Développement* (Regional Centres for Development Assistance)

CRAFS: *Cadre de Réflexion et d'Action sur le Foncier au Sénégal* (Framework for Reflection and Action on Land Tenure in Senegal)

CRCOPR: *Conseil Régional de Concertation des Organisations de Producteurs de Riz d'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Regional Concertation Council of West African Rice Producer Organisations)

CSAO: *Club du Sahel et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Sahel and West Africa Club)

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

CTA: *Central de Trabajadores Argentinos* (Argentine Workers' Union)

CUT: *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* (Unified Workers' Central)

DAPSA: *Direction de l'Analyse, de la Prévision et des Statistiques Agricoles* (Directorship for Agricultural Analysis, Forecast, and Statistics)

EAFF: Eastern African Farmers Federation

EBID: ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development

ECLAC: UN Regional Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECA: Regional Economic Commissions for Africa

ECOWAP: Economic Community of West Africa Agricultural Policy

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

EU: European Union

EPA: Economic Partnership Agreements

FAA: *Federación Agraria Argentina* (Argentine Agrarian Federation)

FAO: UN Food and Agriculture Organisation

FARM: *Federación de Asociaciones Rurales del MERCOSUR* (MERCOSUR Rural Associations' Federation)

FCC: *Federación Cristiana Campesina* (Christian Peasant Federation)

FENALAC: *Federación Nacional de Ligas Agrarias Cristianas* (National Federation of Christian Agrarian Leagues)

FF: *Family Farming(er)*

FIDES: *Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Économique et Social* (Investment Fund for Economic and Social Development)

FAC: *Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération* (Aid and Cooperation Fund)

FAF: *Fondo de la Agricultura Familiar* (Family Farming Fund)

FNC: *Federación Nacional Campesina* (National Peasant Federation)

FNRA: *Fórum Nacional pela Reforma Agrária e Justiça no Campo* (National Forum for Agrarian Reform and Justice in the Countryside)

FONGS: *Fédération des Organisations Non Gouvernementales du Sénégal* (*Senegal Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations*)

FUGN: *Federation des Unions de Groupements Naam* (Federation of Naam Grouping Unions)

GIE: *Groupements d'Interêt Économique* (Economic Interest Groupings)

GJA: *Groupements de Jeunes Agriculteurs* (Young Farmers' Groupings)

GMC: *Grupo Mercado Común* (Common Market Group)

IAPI: *Instituto Argentino de Promoción del Intercambio* (Argentine Institute for Exchange Promotion)

IAR: Integral Agrarian Reform

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

IFAP: International Federation of Agricultural Producers

IMF: International Monetary Fund

INC: *Instituto Nacional de Colonización* (National Colonisation Institute)

INDAP: *Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario* (Agricultural Development Institute)

INDERT: *Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Rural y de la Tierra* (National Institute for Rural Development and Land)

IPAR: *Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale* (Agricultural and Rural Prospective Initiative)

IPC: International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty

IRFED: Institute of Research and Training for Harmonized Development

IYFF: International Year of Family Farming
 JOC: *Juventud Obrera Católica* (Catholic Workers' Youth)
 JEC: *Juventude Estudantil Católica* (Catholic Student Youth)
 JUC: *Juventude Universitária Católica* (Catholic University Youth)
 KOGA: *Coordinación Nacional de Bases Campesinas Cristianas* (Christian Peasant Bases' National Coordination)
 LDC: Least Developed Country
 LOA: *Loi d'Orientation Agricole* (Agricultural Policy Framework Law)
 LOACI: *Loi d'Orientation Agricole de Côte d'Ivoire* (Agricultural Policy Framework Law of Côte d'Ivoire)
 LOASP: *Loi d'Orientation Agro-Sylvo-Pastorale* (Agricultural, Silvicultural, and Pastoral Policy Framework Law)
 LOASPHF: *Loi d'Orientation Agro-Sylvo-Pastorale et Halieutique* (Agricultural, Silvicultural, Pastoral, and Halieutic Policy Framework Law)
 LPI: Land Policy Initiative
 MCNOC: *Mesa Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas* (National Coordinating Committee of Peasant Organisations)
 MDA: *Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário* (Ministry of Agrarian Development)
 MEB: *Movimento de Educação de Base* (Base Education Movement)
 MERCOSUR: *Mercado Común del Sur* (Common Market of the South)
 MIJARC: International Movement of Agrarian and Rural Catholic Youth
 MNCI: *Movimiento Nacional Campesino Indígena* (National Peasant Indigenous Movement)
 MOCASE: *Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero* (Santiago del Estero Peasant Movement)
 MRE: *Ministério das Relações Exteriores* (Ministry of Foreign Relations)
 MST: *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Landless Rural Workers' Movement)
 MUCECH: *Movimiento Unitario Campesino y Etnias de Chile* (United Peasant and Indigenous Movement of Chile)
 MTA: *Movimiento de Trabajadores Argentinos* (Argentine Workers' Movement)
 NAIP: National Agricultural Investment Plans
 NPA: *Nouvelle Politique Agricole* (New Agricultural Policy)
 OCAB: *Organisation Centrale des Producteurs Exportateurs d'Ananas et de Bananes* (Central Organisation of Exporting Producers of Pineapples and Bananas)
 ONAC: *Organización Nacional Campesina* (National Peasant Organisation)
 ORFAO: Regional Land Observatory in West Africa
 PASA: *Plan d'Ajustement Structurel Agricole* (Agricultural Structural Adjustment Plan)
 PAU: *Politique Agricole de l'UEMOA* (UEMOA Agricultural Policy)
 PCB: *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Communist Party)
 PDC: *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* (Christian Democrat Party)
 PFF: *Peasant Family Farming/er*
 PIFF: *Peasant and Indigenous Family Farming/er*
 PIFON: Pacific Islands Farmers' Organisation Network
 PNRA: *Plano Nacional de Reforma Agrária* (National Plan for Agrarian Reform)

PRONAF: *Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar* (National Programme for the Strengthening of Family Farming)

PROPAC: *Plateforme Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale* (Central African Regional Platform of Peasant Organisations)

PROVAPE: *Programa de Valorização da Pequena Produção Rural* (Programme for Valuing Small Rural Production)

PPS: *Plateforme Paysanne du Sahel* (Sahelian Peasant Platform)

PTB: *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Labour Party)

PNOPPA: *Plateforme Nationale des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles du Benin* (National Peasant and Agricultural Producer Organisations' Platform of Benin)

RAAF: Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food

RAIP: Regional Agricultural Investment Plan

RAO: Regional Agrarian Organisation

RBM: *Réseau Billital Maroobé* (Billital Maroobé Network)

REAF: *Reunión Especializada sobre Agricultura Familiar* (Specialised Meeting on Family Farming)

REC: Regional Economic Community

ROPPA: *Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles d'Afrique de l'Ouest* (*Network of Peasant and Agricultural Producer Organisations of West Africa*)

SA: South America

SACAU: Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions

SAR: *Serviço de Assistência Rural* (Rural Extension Service)

SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SENAF: *Comisión de Agricultura Familiar del SENASA* (SENASA's Family Farming Commission)

SENASA: *Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria* (National Agrifood Safety and Quality Service)

SFLP: Social Function of Land Property

SIP: *Sociétés Indigènes de Prévoyance, de Secours, et de Prêts Mutuels Agricoles* (Indigenous Marketing Boards)

Six-S: *Se Servir de la Saison Sèche en Savane et au Sahel* (Taking Advantage of the Dry Season in the Savannah and Sahel)

SYNPA: *Synergie Paysanne* (Peasant Synergy)

TG: Thematic Group (*Grupo Temático*)

UACI: *Union des Aviculteurs de Côte d'Ivoire* (Poultry Farmers' Union of Côte d'Ivoire)

UCA: *Universidad Católica de Asunción* (Catholic University of Asunción)

UDN: *União Democrática Nacional* (National Democratic Union)

UEMOA: *Union Économique et Monétaire d'Afrique de l'Ouest* (West African Economic and Monetary Union)

ULTAB: *União dos Lavradores e Trabalhadores Agrícolas no Brasil* (Agricultural Labourers and Workers' Union of Brazil)

UN: United Nations

UNFFF: United Nations Decade on Family Farming

UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly

UNMFR: *Union Nationale des Maisons Familiales Rurales* (National Union of Rural Family Houses)

UP: *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity)

WA: West Africa

WB: World Bank

WFAL: World Forum on Access to Land

WFO: World Farmers' Organisation

WRF: World Rural Forum

WTO: World Trade Organisation

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Regional Agrarian Organisations

Peasants, agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, middle farmers, and other people living in rural areas make up about 40% of the world's population (Lowder et al., 2014). Women and men of all ages involved in small-scale agriculture, pastoralism, fishery, or forestry activities, predominantly living in the Global South, still represent the planet's largest labouring constituency. They are also the most vigorously organised, with the decline of industrial labour unions since the 1980s, and the rise of agrarian organisations from local to global levels since the 1990s (Borras et al., 2008).

Yet, recent decades have seen an increasing concentration of production, processing, and distribution processes in the hands of a reduced number of agri-food giants across global commodity chains. Agrarian organisations have mobilised to influence non-binding international treaties (e.g. VGGT¹), campaigns (e.g. IYFF²), and goals (e.g. SDGs³), drawn attention to their causes, and generated policy momentum at global negotiating venues. Nevertheless, most national government budgets and strategies – let alone international trade and financial flows – remain oblivious to people living in rural areas, whom they by and large perceive as reserve armies of cheap labour. Though increasing portions of urban populations in countries of the Global North and South begin to recognise peasant family farmers⁴ (PFF) as part of the solution to global food and environmental crises, we are still far from a paradigm shift.

This research sets out to discover how agrarian organisation participation in policy dialogue and negotiation can bring about significant policy change. To do so, it focuses on two

¹ Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of the Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests, adopted by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2012.

² United Nations International Year of Family Farming (2014), approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 2011.

³ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals adopted by UNGA in 2015.

⁴ The term (*peasant*) *family farming(er)* is used throughout this thesis to designate a wide-ranging and diverse rural labouring sector, whose production is usually at least partly self-managed. It is differentiated from more capitalized agricultural sectors by its 'predominant[...] relian[ce] on family labour' (FAO, 2013:2). One of the reasons for adding 'peasant' (and often also 'indigenous') before 'family farming(er)' is to underscore this difference, and avoid confusion with other uses of the term that designate farming(er) in which family labour is *not* predominant (see chapter 6).

regional agrarian organisations (RAOs) representing peasant family farmers, the Confederation of Organisations of Family Producers of MERCOSUR⁵ (COPROFAM) in South America, and the Network of Peasant and Agricultural Producer Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA). Both RAOs have made some inroads into policy formulation, albeit in different areas in each case, with contrasting results. Through a comparative study of their participation in official dialogue spaces, this research aims to unpack how interactions between their representatives, national/regional civil servants, academic researchers, and international organisation staff have enabled the creation of policies in support of peasant family farmers in several countries of MERCOSUR and ECOWAS⁶. It follows three policy processes – land, labour, and trade – that were found to be among both COPROFAM and ROPPA’s central claims.

1.2 Relevance of Research

Throughout the last two decades, countries of both South America and West Africa have witnessed agrarian policy innovations, a significant part of which find their roots in participatory regional spaces where RAOs have aimed to formulate and disseminate policies that strengthen peasant family farming. Although regional dialogues on rural development can be observed in other parts of the world, the experiences of COPROFAM in MERCOSUR and ROPPA in ECOWAS are considered by participants and external observers alike to be particularly relevant, though they have only received scant attention from academic research.

The relevance of comparing these two cases is augmented by the fact that both regional dialogue processes have resulted in concrete policy gains in two very different settings - and despite fierce resistance from powerful economic sectors and political representatives in both cases - making findings potentially relevant for various regions of the world facing similar challenges. On the other hand, collective policy formulation through participatory deliberation and negotiation has yielded a diversity of paths in each of the two regions, rowing against one-size-fits-all global policy currents.

⁵ Common Market of the South.

⁶ Economic Community of West African States

The extent to which agrarian organisations can shape policy-making beyond the local level has been increasingly addressed in studies on global multilateral forums such as the post-2009 reform of the UN Committee on World Food Security (Duncan, Barling, 2012; McKeon, 2015; Brem-Wilson, 2015; Gaarde, 2017). Notwithstanding the national policy norm-shaping potential of international 'soft law' instruments, increasingly centralized global food chains in the hands of a decreasing number of agri-food conglomerates has largely enabled these to set the 'hard' legal norms that shape food and agricultural policy on the ground in recent decades – from World Trade Organisation (WTO) to regional trade rules, and from national legislation to local politics, administrative norms, and practices (McKeon, 2015; Cedro, 2011).

While the global periphery's continental-sized nation-states can potentially wield significant policy-making autonomy thanks to economies of scale and sizeable internal consumer markets, the same cannot be said of the much more numerous smaller and/or lower income nations across the developing world, whose fates tend to be particularly vulnerable to the volatility of international commodity prices. Even Brazil's continental scale and immense wealth of natural resources has not impeded it from recently succumbing into its worst political-economic crisis in decades, in no small part as a result of internal vulnerabilities to the global downfall in commodity prices that followed the 2008 financial crash.

Regional integration projects can potentially enable countries of the Global South to join forces and achieve scale at both production and consumption levels, thus reducing dependency from the oscillations of volatile and unregulated global agricultural and food markets. Regional integration can also enable local economies to become re-embedded into the common social, environmental, and cultural fabric of geographically contiguous territories, whose shared agrarian and political histories largely pre-date their separation into distinct nation-states. Yet these potentials of regional integration as a force for development in the Global South are all but ignored by the globally dominant policy agenda (Mkandawire, 2011).

1.3 Research Question

How, then, have regional agrarian organisations managed to influence policies in their favour under such adverse international conditions? COPROFAM and ROPPA's mobilisation

strategies outside state and regional institutions have worked in parallel with their active participation inside regional dialogue forums that enabled policy milestones to be achieved. But the mere existence of participatory spaces where civil society organisations are 'invited' (Gaventa, 2006) by government authorities to deliberate on agrarian issues can by no means be considered in and of itself a guarantee for meaningful policy change. This leads us to interrogate *under which conditions* can regional dialogue spaces catalyse agrarian organisations' agency to influence policies that strengthen peasant family farmers?

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework and research methodology

Introduction

In order to clarify how I analyse the two cases in the following chapters, I first unpack the previously posed research question by distinguishing its four main conceptual components, visually emphasized (and enumerated by letters in order of appearance) below:

Under which conditions can ***a) regional b) dialogue spaces*** catalyse ***c) agrarian organisations' agency*** to influence ***d) policies that strengthen peasant family farmers?***

If broken down in the above form, the research question reveals four potential 'pistons' generating the 'engine' of RAO political agency: i) *regional* integration (a); ii) *class* relations (c), iii) public *policies* (d), and iv) *dialogue spaces* (b)⁷. By defining and conceptualising each of these in a first theory section of this chapter, I aim to show how I will conduct my analysis of the two empirical cases throughout this thesis. Following a global historical materialist approach, the relative social force of agrarian organisations in influencing policy is premised upon their capacity to join together and consolidate alliances amongst peasant family farmers: i) from a *region's* different agrarian territories and countries; ii) representing diverse rural labouring *class* fractions; iii) unified by economic *policy* discursive frames voiced inside iv) government-mediated political dialogue and negotiation *spaces*.

In the subsequent methodological section, I first explain the rationale for comparing the two regions within multiple time- and spatial scales. Time-scales of different lengths range from a few years when narrating specific policy processes (particularly in chapters 5, 6, 7), to half-century long political-economic cycles when putting these into historical context (in chapters 3 and 4). An understanding of each region through a threefold lens (transborder agrarian territories, neighbouring nations, and regional blocs) is complemented by a wider global frame which sets a common background for the comparison.

⁷ Rearranged in the order in which they form the analytical framework presented in section 2.1. below.

I then explain how I collected the data used in this thesis. This includes practical considerations to overcome the challenges of collecting primary data in several countries across two regions and additional global venues within specific time constraints. The chapter concludes with a reflection on my involvement in this research endeavour, in which I wore two complementary hats: one as a researcher seeking to understand RAOs' strengths and weaknesses by using the analytical tools provided by critical agrarian studies and international political economy; another as a 'scholar-activist' (Borras, 2016) aiming to somehow contribute to RAOs' strategies for policy influence, including by sharing preliminary findings from this research with them.

2.1 Regional Class Policy Spaces: an analytical framework

2.1.1 Regional Integration in the Global South

This first sub-section explains the understanding of regional integration used to analyse COPROFAM and ROPPA's formation in chapters 3 and 4, and the comparative study of their participation in regional policy processes in chapters 5, 6, and 7. After briefly arguing why mainstream regional integration theories are inadequate to study RAOs due to their bypassing of labouring class majorities (of which rural peasantries form a crucial part in the Global South), I draw from critical geographer Milton Santos' (2005) dichotomy between the *territory* and the *network* to elaborate a framework of the region that enables a spatial understanding of agrarian class relations.

Part of the reason for the relative absence of contemporary studies on regional integration in the global periphery is due to the fact that international development institutions, such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have historically been against autonomous regional integration efforts. This is related to the fact that regional integration

has led to the collective adoption of import-substitution industrialisation [and that Bretton Woods] institutions believe that the economies should be 'open' to the entire world – buying from the cheapest supplier and selling to the best buyer, neither of which need be immediate neighbours with whom one

seeks to integrate. This undermines preferential treatment of member states over non-members, which is an inherent part of regional cooperation (Mkandawire, 2011:49).

The promotion of 'open regionalism' was the last visible discourse aiming to theorize regional integration that received serious political attention. Indeed, under 1990s neoliberal globalisation, "[regional] integration became essentially a component of [market] liberalisation and deregulation" (Briceño, 2018:73). Yet regional integration has been understood in past epochs or outside the mainstream as a form of regulating international trade by fomenting a large single market across national boundaries, and shielded from outside interference. Hence, 19th century German political economist Friedrich List

argue[d] that free trade is beneficial among countries at similar levels of industrial development [...] but not between those at different levels of development. [...] To be sure, [...] free trade benefits agricultural exporters in these economies, but this is to the detriment of their national manufacturers and thus of their national economic prosperity in the long run (Chang, 2003:4).

MERCOSUR and ECOWAS are regional entities whose original missions were partly influenced by earlier waves of regional integration, with the UN regional economic commissions for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) and for Africa (UNECA), and some of their influential directors (Raúl Prebisch 1950-1963; Adebayo Adedeji 1975-1991) acting as carriers of "important policy debates on unequal terms of trade between the industrialized North and the global South; as well as national and regional self-sufficiency and people-led development" (Adebajo, 2014:4). Yet, whether defending the "free trading liberal" model that became prevalent in the 1990s, or a previously dominant "interventionist" (Briceño, 2001:1) model as proposed by List, Prebisch, or Adedeji, mainstream regional integration paradigms all but ignored the role of peasantries.

Whether the region is understood as circumscribed locality (in geography and urbanism studies) or as supranational political entity (in international relations), both share the attribute of territorial contiguity. In the 1990s, just as the idea of 'globalisation' was at its prime worldwide, Brazilian geographer Milton Santos noted that at the other end of the geographical spectrum, the 'territory' was making a comeback. According to Santos (as formulated in "The return of the territory", 2005), the horizontal contiguity of everyday face-to-face relations in rural villages or urban peripheries of the Global South – where most of humanity lives – was challenging the hegemonic, globally networked superstructures (made up of nation-states, international political-economic orders, and their ruling classes) to 'a rematch':

in this long journey the *nation-state* was a milestone, a turning point, enthroneing a legal-political notion of territory [...]. However, just as before not everything was, shall we say, 'statized' territory, today not everything is strictly 'transnationalized'. Even in places where the vectors of globalisation are more coherent and effective, the inhabited territory creates new synergies and ends up challenging the world to a rematch (Santos, 2005:255, original emphasis).

According to David Harvey (2006:102-103), if the physical region (i.e. territory) is understood as a "defined space of collective consumption and production as well as political action" and its inhabitants from different classes share "regional consciousness and identities" (i.e. articulated network), the combination of both can lead to a "regional class alliance". Harvey's notion of 'region' refers primarily to the local scale, as is usually the case in geography and urban studies. But its relevance goes beyond it, given that its defining traits (collective consumption and production, political action, and regional consciousness and identities) can equally apply to local territories, neighbouring nations, or regional blocs. Most importantly, it serves to demonstrate that class alliances are not only based on commonly shared socio-economic status across different territories (e.g. internationalist labouring class alliances) but are also often based on shared territorial subjective references and objective day-to-day social relations. Hence "a regional class alliance [prioritizes] the economic health and well-being of the region rather than that of class" (*Ibid*:103).

In his analysis of state formation in the Plata River Basin over the last five centuries, Brazilian historian Moniz Bandeira (2006) weaves together the territorial interplay between class alliances at different scales of that region: hence representatives of overseas export interests predominating in the Southern Cone's coastal capitals (e.g. Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, Buenos Aires) more often than not united against those of their respective interior provinces and their own transborder domestic markets. This dualism between alliances of the 'port' and of the 'interior' within and across national boundaries, as described by Argentine historian Abelardo Ramos (1968), or between the "sector of external market" versus the "sector of subsistence" as distinguished by Brazilian economist Paul Singer (1973), forms the basis for the identification of different *regional agrarian territories* in the two cases examined in this thesis.

The above territorial dichotomies are akin to Amin's (2011) distinction between 'inward-looking' and 'outward-looking' class alliances in countries of the Global South, based on each type of alliance's privileged links: either to their own (local, national, regional) territories, or to

externally (i.e. Global North)-led political-economic agendas. Alain de Janvry's (1981) distinction between 'articulated' and 'disarticulated' patterns of accumulation in Latin America, while similar to the above, offers a terminology that best incorporates both 'vertical' extroverted-introverted types of class alliances, and 'horizontal' class relations within a given territory. Hence, according to de Janvry (1981:41-43, emphases added):

Two types of class alliances tend to exist. One will dominate over the other and thus gain control of the state and redirect the process of accumulation towards the structure that it favours - articulated or disarticulated. Dominance of the alliance among international capital (metropolitan bourgeoisie), dependent bourgeoisie, and landed elites (fundamentally involved in the production of exportables, inputs for industry, and luxury foods) implies that the logic of *disarticulated* accumulation - and hence of cheap labour and cheap food [for urban and Northern consumers] - prevails. [...] Dominance of the alliance among national bourgeoisie, agrarian bourgeoisie (those fundamentally involved in the production of wage foods), peasantry, and proletariat creates the logic for a socially *articulated* pattern of accumulation [...]. [S]trong conflicts [...] remain regarding dominance of one alliance over the other, even if the disarticulated alliance has historically obtained the upper hand [...].

This section has laid out the first *regional* pillar of my analytical framework. Borrowing from Milton Santos' distinction between the local *territories* where labouring majorities live and work, and ruling elites' hegemonic *networks* whose members are often alienated from local realities yet exert disproportionate political-economic power over them, I have merged this with class-relational perspectives that incorporate territorial interactions in their analyses. Understanding a *regional agrarian territory* as a set of contiguous lands sharing physical (e.g. climate and soil) and human (e.g. agrarian social formation) geographic features, I have referred to Harvey's notion of regional class alliance as a lens to identify such territories. Latin American historians and other dependency scholars' conceptualisations of socially *articulated* versus *disarticulated* class alliances, in turn provide a framework of how regional class alliances dialectically interact. These interactions occur not only through historical struggles based on predominant links to internal versus external interests in past time periods, but also – as shall be seen below – through negotiations mediated by states in contemporary regional policy processes.

2.1.2 Agrarian Class Relations

According to Edelman and Borras (2016:6, emphases added), "it is impossible to understand the politics of rural movements without examining their bases or constituencies in particular *social classes* – large commercial farmers, rich peasants, small peasants or landless labourers – as well as the *class alliances* that may exist within agrarian organisations". As argued by Campling et al. (2016:1748, emphases added), class agency is produced by "relations within and between multifaceted classes [...] which are located at different *historical* and *spatial* scales and mediated in a variety of ways". Thus, the "infinite iteration of dialectical relations between human actions and material conditions is the process through which class formation and relations are to be understood" (*Ibid.*). Even in cases where the margin for manoeuvre of labouring classes is severely constrained by the balance of class forces, "labour possesses agency, albeit often latent and hidden from view" (*Ibid.*).

Contrary to several strands of Marxist thought, Antonio Gramsci did not perceive the (political-ideological) superstructure as subordinate to (economic material) base, but rather understood the two as equally interdependent (Portelli, 1971:10):

The study of the relationship between structure and superstructure is the essential aspect of the notion of historical bloc. But Gramsci never conceived of this study in the form of the primacy of one or the other element of this bloc, as some of his commentators often do. Ultimately, the concept of a historical bloc would then have no other object than the definition of Marxist orthodoxy, by accusing of economism or idealism anyone who dwells too much on one or the other moment of the historical bloc.

Gramsci's conceptualisation of the historical bloc represents a more dynamic understanding of material class relations and competing discursive strategies than the above-referred 'economistic' or 'idealistic' strands of Marxism. Most importantly, it gives practical guidance on how to potentiate subordinate class agency (Portelli, 1971; Forgacs, 2000), by uncovering the pivotal role of organic intellectuals operating at the superstructural level. As laid out in Gramsci's seminal text "Analysis of Situations, Relations of Force", organic intellectuals' political-ideological discourse is crucial in ensuring both wide reach *and* internal coherence of class alliances at the structural level (Gramsci, 1932-34:C13 §17, emphases added):

A third moment is that in which one becomes aware that one's own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups, too. This is the most purely *political* phase, and marks

the decisive passage from the *structure* to the sphere of the complex *superstructures*; it is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become "party", come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or at least a single combination of them, tends to prevail, to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society — bringing about not only a unison of *economic* and *political* aims, but also intellectual and moral unity, posing all the questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate but on a "universal" plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups.

Eric Wolf's (1999 [1969]) comparative study of successful peasant uprisings in six countries of the global periphery during the 20th century identifies two specific class fractions of the countryside which had a pivotal role in overcoming oppressive regimes (and, in some cases, achieving national independence): 'middle peasants' and 'poor but free peasants'. Middle peasants generally share common ground with both the rural poor (who either remain in the countryside or sever their ties with it when they move to the city) and the urban proletariat (particularly through ties built by their children who study in cities while their parents stay on the land). "Poor but 'free' peasants" are often situated at the territorial fringes of countries and therefore are "not [as significantly] constrained by any power domain", whether that of local semi-feudal landlords or capitalist multinationals (Wolf, 1999:292). These two categories have been found to "constitute the pivotal groupings for peasant uprisings" (*Ibid.*).

The historically indeterminate behaviour of these class fractions – on some occasions allied with broader labouring classes, on others turning up against them – is what makes them 'pivotal'. Hence "middle peasants [...] may embrace both rich- and poor-peasant policies at different times, partly depending on whether they have secure access to and/or ownership of the land they work and whether their situation is gravitating towards the well-to-do stratum or the poor farmer category" (Edelman and Borras, 2016:44). The variable conditions that convince members of those pivotal class fractions to either join or oppose contemporary struggles of peripheral peasantries and wider labouring classes are particularly relevant to this thesis, as the observation of discursive battles waged outside and inside regional policy dialogues in the following chapters will show.

Wolf's (1969) theory is complemented by Moyo and Yeros (2005), who underline the pivotal role of an agrarian class fraction (partly overlapping with Wolf's 'poor but free peasant') in the building and consolidation of articulated class alliances: the semi-proletarianised peasantry. The concept of semi-proletariat, a category specific to Southern countries,

encompasses labourers who derive their incomes from multiple activities – such as subsistence farming and wage labour – and periodically migrate between rural areas and city slums, where they may or may not find work, often under precarious/informal labouring conditions. Given that semi-proletarianised peasants constitute the "core social base of [contemporary] rural movements" (Moyo and Yeros 2005:5), and that the latter are "the nucleus of anti-imperialist politics today – and hence of genuine labour internationalism" (*Ibid*:9), the role of agrarian organisations in reflecting the interests of their semi-proletarianised social base in their policy claims has decisive implications for articulated development strategies in the global periphery.

Particular class fractions of the wider peasantries have been identified as pivotal for revolutionary struggles in the global periphery to be successful, as Wolf's (1969) case studies indicate. Often more overlooked are the roles played by peasantries in social-democratic endeavours of both core and periphery (with the important exceptions of Luebbert, 1991, Berman, 2006, and Sandbrook et al., 2006). These are particularly relevant for this thesis, given that it looks at agrarian organisations seeking to influence policies through participatory deliberation within contemporary peripheral democratic regimes.

Hence, the "foundation of social democratic hegemony [in Scandinavian countries] was provided by the political alliances that were formed in the 1930s between urban workers and family peasants" (Luebbert, 1991:267), particularly in landmark agreements between industrial workers and the peasantry (sealed in Denmark (1933), Norway (1935), and Sweden (1938)). These 'red-green alliances' were enabled not only by "the political hegemony of working class parties or the extending of "semi-sovereign status [to trade unions] in making social policies" (*Ibid*.:270) but also by the existence of so-called Agrarian political parties.

Representing the small and medium peasantry, and usually situated at the centre of the political spectrum, Northern European Agrarian parties negotiated common policy platforms with the industrial working classes' Social Democratic parties. These were to benefit both their constituencies through policy mechanisms negotiated with state authorities under newly formed coalition governments. This forced employer organisations to adapt to those demands, instead of having the latter pit the former two against each other (an opposing class dynamic that enabled fascism to fill the void of the downfall of liberalism in other parts of interwar Europe,

e.g. Germany). Indeed, "as long as peasants remained satisfied with their alliance, there was no plausible strategy for [employers to revise] the political situation" (*ibid.*:271). Thus, alliances of "workers and middle peasants [provided] Social Democrats with a secure social base" (*ibid.*).

While the basis for European fascism was laid by a "coalition between the urban middle classes and the family peasantry", a "social democratic order required a coalition of the urban *working* classes and the family peasantry" (Luebbert, 1991:278, emphasis added), compelling the middle classes to accept and adapt to the new realities. Thus, family peasantries represented by agrarian organisations and political parties were a pivotal force in the two main political-economic coalitions that marked 1930s Europe: with virtuous consequences in the social-democratic Nordic paths, and tragic ones in the fascist central and Southern European paths (Berman, 2006; Luebbert, 1991).

One of the most significant lessons from the above cases is the fact that pivoting of the peasantry *with* or *against* the working classes was considerably influenced by political appeals to values deeply entrenched in those countries' societies, in discourses that either bridged or accentuated divides along class (e.g. wage workers versus 'petty bourgeoisies') and territorial (e.g. urban versus rural) lines. Two 'collective action frames' (Benford and Snow, 2000) in particular were mobilized with great efficacy during the turbulent 1930s by very different political forces (social-democrats and fascists), in favour of opposing political projects: 'the people', and 'the nation' (Berman, 2006).

Fascist communitarian or identitarian appeals to their countries' constituencies as representing a people and nation *in opposition* to an extraneous 'other' upon whom all frustrations were to be directed through racism, xenophobia, and imperial war-waging are well-known. What is much less well-documented, but aptly so by Berman (2006), are the political discursive framings and consequent cross-class alliance building processes through which Nordic social-democrats – most emblematically in Sweden – enlarged their political base to an otherwise conservative middle farmer and peasant public. "Embracing concepts such as 'people' and 'nation' that the radical right was exploiting successfully elsewhere, the SAP [Swedish Social Democratic Party] was able to claim the mantle of national unity and social solidarity during the chaos of the early 1930s" (Berman, 2006:162). Thus, the Swedish social democrats strategy

"emphasized the party's desire to help not merely workers, but the 'weak', the 'oppressed', and 'people' more generally – [thus successfully neutralizing] the fears of some farmers and peasants." (*Ibid*:167).

Sandbrook et al. (2006) have identified comparable (though less consolidated) social-democratic trajectories and patterns in the global periphery, in which peasantries have successfully struck alliances with urban workers and middle classes, thereby compelling elected governments to make important policy concessions to the wider labouring classes. Yet the cases analysed in their book are an isolated set of small countries with very open economies (e.g. Costa Rica, Mauritius), and a correspondingly limited capacity to pursue autonomous industrialisation at scale. Moreover, notwithstanding their historical relevance in both core and peripheral social-democratic endeavours, collective action frames such as 'the people' or 'the nation' are very broad and do not adequately capture the intricacies of agrarian policy processes and shifting regional class alliances. This justifies the need to examine *policy discursive frames* that weave political alliances around specific economic goals.

2.1.3 Reclaiming Economic Policy Discourse

Policy discourse is defined here as *representing* concrete interests of a specific class or wider class alliance, and *negotiated* in policy spaces with representatives of other classes, with the mediation of state civil servants. I explain below how policy discourse is analysed throughout this thesis as efforts by class representatives – particularly organic "peasant intellectuals" (Moyo and Yeros, 2005:45) from agrarian organisations – to cognitively reconverge the severed economic (territorially-grounded base) and political (networked superstructural) spheres.

Following Gramsci's theorisation of organic intellectuals as establishing links between economic base and political superstructure (see previous section 2.1.2), policy dialogue spaces are understood in this thesis as potential enablers of reconnections between economic and political discourse. Indeed, while the two were hitherto epistemologically indissociable in 18th-19th century classical political economy, they became increasingly separate fields of knowledge (e.g. through the creation of 'pure economics' as a separate academic discipline from political

science), a division that has been reified into institutions and law by contemporary capitalist democracies since the late 19th century (Hudson, 2012; Unger, 2015).

Indeed, a key characteristic of capitalist democracies is that despite the legal recognition of civil and political rights (e.g. universal suffrage, freedom of speech and assembly) these tend to be permitted under a tacit agreement that most citizens be kept from decision-making on hard economic policy. Under 'market democracies', decisions that affect economic material realities are generally restricted to a limited group of technical experts, scientists, and civil servants whose work (knowingly or not) disproportionately serves the interests of the ruling classes (Sweezy, 1980). The most significant exceptions to this rule are found in labour-capital collective bargaining spaces, which provided significant advances for labouring classes in the 1930s-1970s – at least to the extent that the latter were represented by sufficiently robust and diverse organisations. Therefore, the opening and influencing of those exceptional spaces that *do* affect economic policy to non-ruling classes in contemporary democratic regimes is not surprisingly perceived as crucial by social movements, unions, and other organisations representing the wider labouring classes.

Polanyi (1944:77) characterised what he termed 'market society'⁸ as resulting from a separation between the economic and political spheres:

A self-regulating market demands nothing less than the institutional separation of society into an economic and political sphere. [...] Neither under tribal, nor feudal, nor mercantile conditions was there, as we have shown, a separate economic system in society. Nineteenth century society, in which economic activity was isolated and imputed to a distinctive economic motive, was, indeed, a singular departure.

This systemic rift brought about by market society was illustrated by what Polanyi described as the disembedding of land, labour, and money, and their transformation into 'fictitious commodities'. In other words, instead of being understood for what they objectively are – nature (land), humans (labour), and exchange tokens (money) - under capitalism those three elements become tradeable like any other commodity, with deleterious societal and environmental consequences. This closely relates to agrarian organisations' central emphasis on

⁸ Following Fraser (2017), for our purposes, we consider 'market society' to be interchangeable with 'capitalism', notwithstanding their conceptual differences, rooted respectively in Polanyi's and Marx's critiques thereof.

political regulation of land, labour, and trade⁹ through specific public policies, as we shall see in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Similar to Polanyi's point on institutional separation between economic and political spheres, the rise of what we know today as representative democracy came into being from a historic compromise in industrialising Europe and North America around the 1870s: in exchange for gradually extending the voting franchise to the whole national population, legally recognising labour unions, and making some concessions to these by increasing real wages and building a Welfare State through progressive taxation (Chang, 2003; Losurdo, 2014), ruling classes made sure that most other key economic policy choices were left outside the deliberative political sphere of liberal democratic regimes (Sweezy, 1980). This was cognitively ensured in society at large by a scientific rift between politics and economics (Hudson, 2012).

It is worth recalling the often obscured fact that prior to the late 19th century, economics was not an abstract discipline based on pseudo-universal 'assumptions' about the functioning of societies and their allegedly politically neutral 'rational economic men' (Raworth, 2017). Rather it was part and parcel of *political economy*, understood as the economic management of the well-being of a nation as a whole, whether theorized by liberals (e.g. Adam Smith, David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill) or critiqued and expanded upon by Karl Marx (Hudson, 2012).

For all their differences regarding relations between capital and labour, all of the above authors shared a concern with isolating economic rent. Sources of the latter were seen as remnants of feudalism during the rise of capitalism, leading to a waste of resources which could be otherwise used for productive investment, consumption, or redistributive policies. Economic rent, which can be defined as the unproductive 'unearned income' transferred from societies' majorities to a minority of 'idle rich', was identified by classical political economists as particularly

⁹ Though the object of trade policy are traded goods, international trade policy *instruments* deal with the regulation of *prices* (e.g. through trade tariffs), directly affecting the monetary value of agricultural goods (e.g. making imported goods more expensive than national ones). Moreover, countries' balance of payments (of which trade in goods is a key component) in theory are one of the determinants of the value of national currencies. Yet exposure of deregulated economies to financial speculation under the post-1971 international floating exchange rate monetary regime means that currency values can considerably vary based on factors dissociated from trade in goods. Hence, insofar as agrarian organisations' focus on trade policy is fundamentally linked to preventing or curbing unequal exchange (accentuated by financialisation, i.e. commodification of money), we consider this policy process to be closely related to Polanyi's third 'fictitious commodity'.

pervasive in three key areas: ownership of land (e.g. left idle for speculation), usurious interest charged on loans (i.e. financial rent), and income earned from unilaterally concentrated market dominance (i.e. monopoly rent) (Hudson, 2012). The channelling and compounding of different forms of rent to capitalists as profit through the exploitation of labour is an additional (and, under capitalism, all-pervasive) form of rent, identified by Marx as surplus value (Baran and Foster, 2017).

Yet a further type of rent became increasingly dominant after the 1870s, when capitalist accumulation became systematized on a global scale. Indeed, the rapid territorial expansion of capitalism from Europe to the rest of the world, politically mediated by colonialist discourse and institutions, enabled unprecedented levels of rent extraction and transfer from the rest of the world back to Europe. This included not only the above-mentioned forms of rent (land, finance, monopoly rents - compounded by wage labour exploitation), but an additional form of 'imperial rent' resulting from the fact that labour exploitation and resource extraction in the world's peripheries is many times more intense than in its centres. Disguised through such mechanisms as pricing and exchange rates, imperial rent is defined by Samir Amin as the difference between real *wages* paid to workers in the world's peripheries and centres, which is larger than the difference between their actual *productivities* (Amin, 2020, 1993; Foster, 2011). In other words, Amin's law of worldwide value is characterised by the fact that

the price of the labour force is distributed in a much more unequal way than are the productivities of social labour. There are differences in the productivity of labour, of course, but the differences in productivity are smaller than the differences in the price of labour. For example, while the difference in productivity between the US and Congo is 1:5, the difference in the price of the labour force may be 1:20 (Kvangraven, 2017:12-13).

Indeed, the exponential rise in surplus value extraction from peripheries to centres through systematic transfer of imperial rent from the 1870s onwards was a key factor creating space for capital to cede ground to labour on wage rises and Welfare state creation in the world's centres. This process, by which labour in the centres obtains relative gains at the expense of labour in the peripheries has been coined by Marini (1973) as *super-exploitation* of labour in the peripheries. In political terms, the growing rift between wages and social conditions in centres and peripheries made it increasingly difficult for the labouring classes of the Global North and South to unite under a common banner (Amin, 1993).

Whilst *competitive capitalism* was mainly prevalent in northwestern Europe and North America until the early to mid-19th century, the second industrial revolution's railroads, telegraph lines, and steamboats greatly accelerated the worldwide territorial expansion of corporations' control over markets across production and distribution chains, marking a transition from mostly local-national to fully global *monopoly capitalism* by the 1870s-1880s (Amin, 1993; Sweezy, 1994). Monopoly capital was perhaps most famously theorized by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy in their seminal (1966) book, in which they further refined Baran's (1957) concept of the economic surplus, briefly defined in the book's introduction as "the difference between what a society produces and the costs of producing it" (Baran and Sweezy, 1966:9). Under global monopoly capitalism, the size of the economic surplus increased exponentially, in both absolute terms as well as relative to Marx's first two departments (i.e. production and consumption), a result not just of productivity gains but crucially of the combined sources of economic rent mentioned above. Yet, despite its exponential rise, an increasing portion of the surplus became diverted into wasteful activities (e.g. sales and marketing, inadequate civilian government expenditure, militarism and imperialism), although it could in theory be reinvested into more productive, socially distributed, and environmentally sustainable activities, if only the political system would allow it. Indeed, under monopoly capitalist societies, the "*modes of utilization of the surplus* constitute the indispensable mechanism linking the economic foundation of society with [...] its political, cultural, and ideological superstructure" (Baran and Sweezy, 1966:8, emphasis added).

Amin's (1993:209) definition of the nation as the "centralisation of the surplus" enables to pose the national question in the Global South in terms of the capacity for societies to create articulated class alliances across their national territories to prevent their generated surplus to be siphoned off by dependent bourgeoisies and central nations' ruling elites. Consequently, agrarian organisations' struggles for land, labour, and trade regulation via public policies are analysed in this thesis as efforts to distribute and reinvest their generated agrarian surplus into national and regional public goods, versus transferring it to rentier elites in both peripheries and centres.

Since the 1970s, a third era has been set off by a further acceleration of globalisation through worldwide diffusion of information and communication technologies, as well as by

financial deregulation and the end of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate international monetary system. Accurately dubbed "global monopoly-finance capital[ism]" (Foster, 2014:vii), the deployment of the current phase of the capitalist mode of production on a world scale has run parallel with the diffusion of neoliberal ideology to justify it, and hide its most perverse concentrating effects.

Given all of the above, it is not surprising that agrarian organisations have primarily sprung in the world's peripheries, as peasants suffer from the triple exploitation of (a) global North, (b) national South, and (c) local South 'centres' relative to their respective (a') global South, (b') national labouring, and (c') local rural 'peripheries'. This is made clear by Amin's six-fold class distinction, whereby global centre bourgeoisies, national peripheries' dependent bourgeoisies, and local rural semi-feudal landlords all extract surplus from the world's labouring classes, particularly their largest and most exploited contingent - the peasantries of the Global South. In parallel, labouring classes of the Global North, and of the urban centres and/or formalized economic enclaves of the Global South - though also exploited - obtain small benefits relative to the more harshly exploited peasantries and informal urban semi-proletariat of the Global South, thus posing challenges for unity amongst the wider labouring classes (Foster, 2011).

Distinguishing centres and peripheries through surplus extraction and transfer mechanisms operating at least at those three scales justifies a multiscalar approach to understanding regional policy processes (see methodology section 2.2 below). Moreover, given that different types of rent are extracted and transferred to ruling elites at local, national, and global levels makes it all the more important to interrogate what happens at the overlooked *regional* level, which under regional integration endeavours in the Global South are generally underfunded, but serve as potential venues for a greater centralisation - and, if agrarian organisations can wield their influence there, redistribution - of neighbouring nations' combined economic surplus.

This section has laid out the international political-economic theoretical bases for the comparative analysis of policy processes on land, labour, and trade in South America and West Africa undertaken in this thesis. As explained above, the discourse of peasant intellectuals representing the members of COPROFAM and ROPPA will be analysed through Gramsci's concept

of the organic intellectual, who performs a crucial societal role in (re-)establishing severed cognitive links between economic base and political superstructure, by elaborating *political* discourses centred on *economic* policy claims. Hence, the following chapters will interrogate whether these discourses are elaborated internally by agrarian organisations with the aim to genuinely *represent* the grievances and demands of their social bases in local rural villages, but also to what extent they are formulated to demonstrate the social force of wider territorially-rooted regional class alliances, so as to compel their respective states and regions in the Global South to *negotiate* a fairer distribution of the economic surplus generated by their societies and mostly siphoned off to rentier elites in both South and North. The comparative examination of COPROFAM and ROPPA peasant intellectuals' discourse (and that of their organic intellectual allies in civil service, academia, and international organisations) on land, labour, and trade policy issues will thus be analysed as part of societal efforts to regulate capitalism and 're-embed' Polanyi's three 'fictitious commodities' into their local social fabric, through wide rural labouring class alliances and territorial articulation in two regions of the global periphery.

2.1.4 Intersubjective Political Dialogue Spaces

One of the key lines of argumentation of the deleterious effects of capitalism in its monopoly phase argued by Baran and Sweezy (1966) was the exposure of its profoundly *irrational* nature, as the title of their book's last chapter¹⁰ indicates. Yet the fact that the system appears rational to most, thus forming the moral basis for capitalist democracies' political legitimacy, shows us that the concept of *reason* and its different uses deserve close examination, if rationally argued policy discourse is to form the basis for dialogue between agrarian organisations and governments. Habermas' (1987) distinction between subjective *instrumental rationality* and intersubjective *communicative rationality* is particularly useful in this respect.

Habermas critiqued Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972 [1947]) for mistaking reason with one of its particular manifestations – utilitarian, reductionist, instrumental rationality. Narrow instrumental rationality is explicit, for instance, in the "non-

¹⁰ Chapter 11, 'The Irrational System'.

universal, particularistic, self-seeking, rational economic man" underpinning 'pure' neoliberal economics (Raworth, 2017: 96). According to Habermas, subjective instrumental rationality must be counterbalanced by intersubjective communicative rationality, if the public sphere, understood as a realm enabling "free uncoerced debate among equals" (Gunaratne, 2006:96) is to live up to its ideal.

Gaventa (2006:26) defines *spaces* "as opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests". This definition of spaces is therefore not restricted to the physical rooms located within government office buildings (i.e. 'invited spaces'), where policy deliberations that are more or less open to participation by outsiders occur. In this sense, it has commonalities with Habermas' conception of the public sphere. Indeed, the latter not only refers to the coffeehouses, salons, masonic lodges, and other objective physical spaces where the ascending bourgeoisie met and discussed matters of public interest in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It also refers to the subjective networks of people, such as "religious academies, political forums, and literary organisations" (Habermas, 1989:164), the ideas intersubjectively developed by them inside and outside those physical spaces, and the counter-hegemonic diffusion of these ideas compounded by "the power of the printed word" (*Ibid*: 163) during the first industrial revolution (1770s-1830s).

Though originally formulated in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989 [1962]) (STPS), Habermas' conceptualisation thereof was subsequently integrated into his *Theory of Communicative Action* (1987 [1981]) in which he further problematized "cognitive instrumental rationality [imposing] purposive rational action" (Gunaratne, 2006:96) upon societies, a certainly necessary though not sufficient (and if left unchecked, perverse) type of rationality in the management of societies' common affairs. Communicative rationality, on the other hand, could enable "participants [to] reach agreement through argumentation based on the validity claims of truth, moral rightness, and sincerity" (*Ibid.*). According to Habermas (1987:121-122, emphases added), in the second volume of his *Theory of Communicative Action*

This continual process of definition and redefinition involves correlating contents to worlds—according to what counts in a given instance as a consensually interpreted element of the *objective world*, as an *intersubjectively* recognized normative component of the social world, or as a private element of a *subjective world* to which someone has privileged access.

Habermas' distinction between (subjective) instrumental rationality and (intersubjective) communicative rationality has significantly influenced debates on democratic deliberation and policy influence. The demise of the once vibrant bourgeois public sphere of late 18th-early 19th century Europe described by Habermas in STPS has led to a colonisation of the 'lifeworld' by the 'system' - or, said otherwise, of communicative rationality by instrumental rationality (Smith et al., 2015). Instrumental rationality, which can be understood as a kind of solely utilitarian "means-end rationality" has increasingly spread throughout modern capitalist societies, leading to the "bureaucratisation and concentration of power in the hands of technically skilled elites who treat politics as the preserve of experts, not citizens" (Held, 2006:236).

Hence, technical expertise becomes reified and ends up serving a reductionist understanding of reason "as logic coupled with scientifically constructed empirical knowledge", rather than as "intersubjective mutual understanding arrived at by particular people in particular times and places; that is [as] historically situated" (Healey, cited by Keeley and Scoones, 2000:31). Against "positivist assumptions of conventional linear policy analysis and the instrumentally rationalist nature of contemporary planning and administrative systems", scholars influenced by Habermas have aimed to integrate intersubjective discursive conceptions into theories of democracy and participatory policy formulation, such as Dryzek's 'discursive democracy' or Healey's 'collaborative planning' (*Ibid.*).

Emphasizing communicative rationality therefore does not imply shunning science, but rather, as Keeley and Scoones (2000:32, emphasis added) put it, the creation of "communicative institutions allow[ing] multiple perspectives to come into debate, and, through processes of argumentation, the *negotiation* of goals and values and appropriate courses of action". For this to occur, "deliberation [...] needs to be extended to the relationship between scientific experts and citizens in ways that do not mean negating the institutions of science, but transforming them so that, where decision stakes and uncertainty are high, the deliberations of scientists are subject to 'extended peer review'" (*Ibid.*), i.e. to public debate by society at large, not just by enclosed groups of technocrats.

In this respect, de Sousa Santos (2012:43) defines *intercultural translation* as "a procedure that allows for mutual intelligibility among the diverse experiences of the world", and considers

it one of the pillars to build an epistemology of the South that challenges reductionist interpretations of such concepts as the 'public sphere' or 'democracy', which he dismisses as plagued by Eurocentrism. De Sousa Santos considers intercultural translation particularly crucial "for an alternative to neoliberal globalisation on the basis of transnational networks of local movements" (*Ibid*:61) to emerge. Hence agrarian organisations' legitimacy in engaging into rational intersubjective policy dialogue at national or regional institutional levels depends on their leaders' capacity to interculturally translate the popular and local languages of their peasant bases.

One of the attributes through which Paulo Freire (1985:48) distinguishes "popular syntax" from the formal grammar of ruling classes, is the former's direct relationship to the concrete, versus the latter's greater focus on the conceptual. Freire (1985:49) argues that grammatically incorrect popular syntax should be accepted to be "just as beautiful" as the grammatically correct discourse validated by ruling elites. In other words, peasants' discourse emanating from their daily lived realities should be considered just as valid as that of civil servants speaking in technical policy jargon. Nevertheless, Freire (1985:49-50) also advocates that the popular classes must learn the rules of official discourse in order to be able to "put up a better fight with the dominant class". This relates to Frantz Fanon's (1986:18) reflections on the fact that he or she who "has a language possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" whose mastery "affords remarkable power".

Indeed, Fanon's (1986:18 [1952]) remark that the peoples living under the French colonial Empire, "will come closer to being [considered as] real human being[s] in direct ratio to [their] mastery of the French language" still rings true even generations after most African countries' political independence. When the language of the ruling classes and/or colonial powers' is mastered, however, it is often at the expense of one's own cultural identity. This is accentuated by how colonial (or neocolonial) domination, including through language, breeds an inferiority complex in colonized peoples through the "burial of [their] local cultural originality" (*Ibid.*).

This connects to Fanon's (2002, [1961]:145) argument about the lack of national consciousness of bourgeoisies in the global periphery, given that their social reproduction is so intimately tied to their integration into the metropole's economic circuits and political

administrative structures. National consciousness is understood by Fanon as the "coordinated crystallisation of the innermost aspirations of the whole people, [...] the immediate and visible result of popular mobilisation". Global South bourgeoisies' lack of national consciousness is thus linked to their "historic incapacity [...] to rationalise popular praxis, that is to extract the underlying reason from it" (*Ibid.*). Therefore, following Freire and Fanon's insights, what is at stake in development processes is the capacity of pivotal actors to interculturally translate between different types of knowledge and language, across *class* and within entire *nations/regions*, in order to politically negotiate policies that benefit their wider constituencies.

We now summarize the first theoretical section of this chapter by joining together the four pillars of RAO political agency presented above (regional integration, class relations, policy discourse, dialogue spaces) as displayed in table 1 below. Each of the four pillars' key concepts is displayed in its respective column, while each of the three bottom lines of the table establish transversal correspondences between these.

Regional Integration	Class Relations	Policy Discourse	Dialogue Spaces
Territory	Base	Reality	Objective
Competing Networks	Counter-Hegemonic Superstructures	Representation	Subjective
Mediated Networks	Hegemonic Superstructure	Negotiation	Intersubjective

Table 1: *Summarized regional class policy spaces analytical framework.*

Hence, in the first of these three lines, Milton Santos' (2005) conception of the territory is understood as the geographic equivalent of the historical materialist concept of economic base, i.e. objective material reality, the prime object of policy discourse dealt with in physical dialogue spaces (e.g. government building meeting rooms), and the actual ground where policies

are implemented (e.g. peasant family farms) . The following line illustrates the subjective efforts of RAOs and others at making sense of their constituencies' lived realities on the ground by collectively representing their different interests and policy visions, and deploying the resulting counter-hegemonic political discourses through their alternative regional networks¹¹. The last line illustrates the actual spaces¹² of regional participatory policy deliberation, in which different subjective points of view on objective material issues are intersubjectively debated. Hence political dialogue on economic policy is epitomized by inter-class negotiation, whereby competing regional networks are mediated by government authorities, within the constraints – but also potentially through the cracks - of the ruling class hegemonic superstructural apparatus of those regions' actually existing states.

The following methodology section (2.2) explains how these inter-related concepts are operationalized to guide the comparative study between COPROFAM and ROPPA in the following chapters (2.2.1), provides an account of the strategies I adopted to collect empirical data during fieldwork (2.2.2), and concludes with a brief reflection on my own role in this research endeavour (2.2.3).

2.2 Research Methodology

2.2.1 Comparing two regions across multiple scales

2.2.1.1 Case study selection

This study's object of inquiry can be situated within a wider field investigating the policy influence of social movements and labour unions. Though regional agrarian organisations increasingly figure as single case studies, no studies comparing different regional agrarian organisations were identified at the time of writing. This served as an incentive to go ahead with

¹¹ These alternative networks compete for policy space with the hegemonic 'network' referred in Milton Santos' (2005) territory-network dichotomy.

¹² Following the wider understanding of Gaventa's (2006) (invited) spaces and of Habermas' (1989) public sphere discussed previously.

a comparative study, despite the significant challenges of analysing two large and complex ensembles with sufficient depth to make the comparison relevant.

Indeed, during my previous work with regional agrarian organisation members in global, regional, and national level policy spaces, I had observed parallels between COPROFAM and ROPPA members, including their capacity to discursively integrate local, national, regional, and global issues (often giving concrete examples from each scale in speeches that lasted only a few minutes), demonstrating that it was possible to synthesize multiscalar policy issues in an integrated form. Whilst working in South America with MERCOSUR's Specialised Meeting on Family Farming (REAF), however, it became clear that mutual comprehension between agrarian issues in different parts of the world remained overshadowed by significant knowledge gaps on processes occurring outside one's own region. Thus, the need to contribute in raising mutual knowledge between agrarian organisations from different regions, as well as to fill a gap in international political economy and critical agrarian studies warranted the cross-regional comparative endeavour undertaken in this thesis.

COPROFAM and ROPPA are arguably today's strongest regional agrarian organisations (see maps in Figures 1 and 2 below) in terms of size¹³, coherence, and policy influence. Other regional peasant family farmer-based organisations have been active in recent decades, but they are less relevant for this study because: i) they are not as strategically engaged in political dialogue with a regional integration organisation (e.g. LVC-affiliated CLOC¹⁴ in Latin America); ii) they represent narrower rural constituencies (e.g. West African pastoralist networks APESS and RBM¹⁵); iii) their composition is wider and includes large-scale agribusiness organisations (e.g. Southern Africa's SACAU¹⁶); iv) their membership includes both developing and developed member countries (e.g. AFA¹⁷ in East, Southeast, and South Asia); v) they are not as coherently

¹³ COPROFAM is composed of 9 national platforms (in 7 countries) joining together 115 affiliated second degree organisations (confederations and federations), representing an estimated 22 million peasant family farmers. ROPPA is composed of 13 national platforms joining together 147 second degree organisations (federations and unions), representing approximately 20 million peasant family farmers. Interviews AO-SA5 and AO-WA12.

¹⁴ Latin American Coordination of Rural Organisations.

¹⁵ Respectively, Association for the Promotion of Pastoralism in the Savanah and the Sahel, and Billital Maroobé Network.

¹⁶ Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions.

¹⁷ Asian Farmers Association.

structured or politically influential in their respective regions (such as PROPAC in Central Africa, EAFF in Eastern Africa, or PIFON in the Pacific Islands¹⁸).

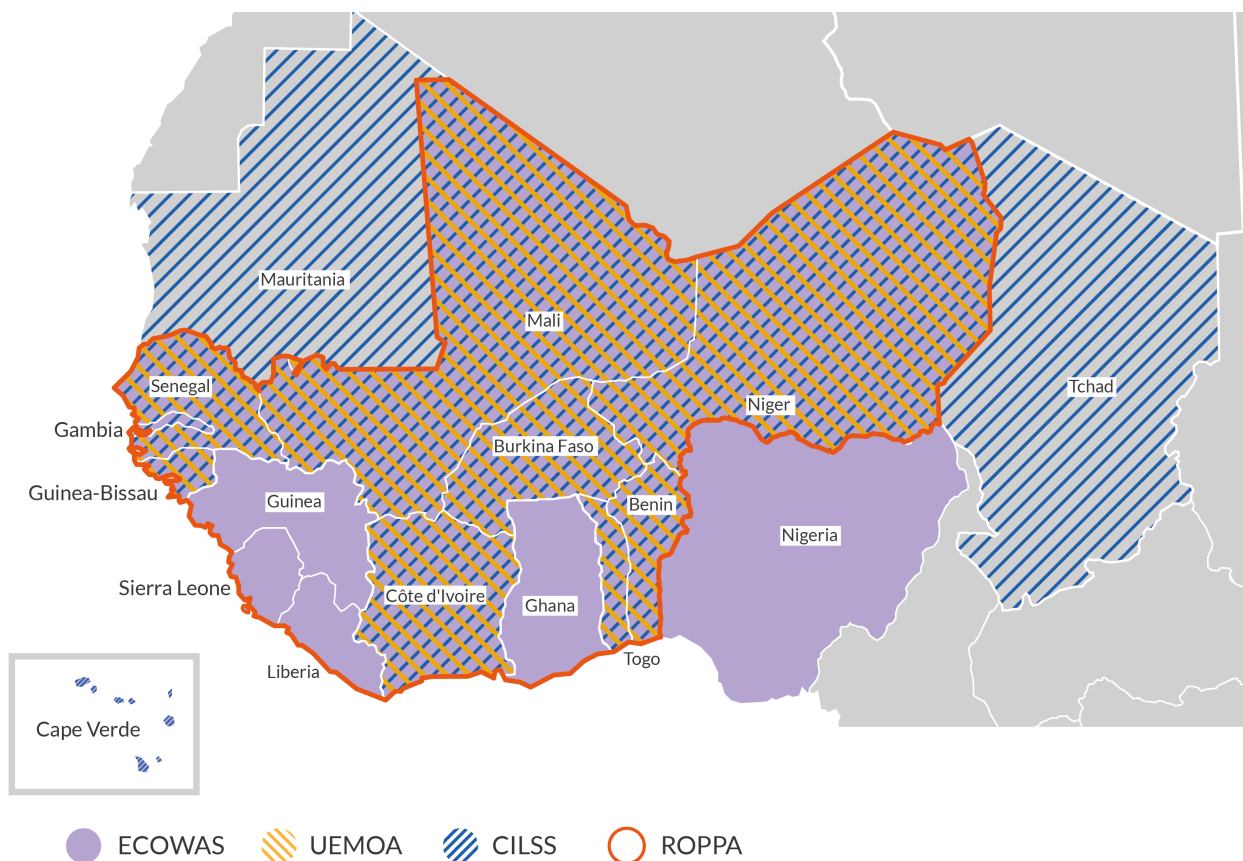


Figure 1: *COPROFAM and South American Regional Integration.*¹⁹

¹⁸ Respectively Central African Regional Platform of Peasant Organisations, Eastern African Farmers Federation, and Pacific Islands Farmers Organisation Network.

¹⁹ Author's own elaboration. Graphics by Luísa Vieira.

Given the above, COPROFAM and ROPPA's regional significance is comparable to that of La Vía Campesina (LVC) at the global level, even if strategies, membership composition, and visions may differ, depending on the issues at stake.²⁰ Despite their importance, however,



²⁰ Neither COPROFAM nor ROPPA are members of LVC, but have worked closely with the global peasant network over the decades. This has occurred at global (as co-members of the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC)) and continental levels (through both COPROFAM and CLOC national members' participation in the Latin American Alliance for Peoples' Food Sovereignty). Six of ROPPA's thirteen national platforms are currently member organisations of LVC, as are some of COPROFAM's former national member organisations. Both COPROFAM and ROPPA previously had some national-level members affiliated to the agribusiness-led IFAP before its collapse in 2010, but these did not join its successor organisation, World Farmers' Organisation (WFO). In Latin American countries, competition between LVC and COPROFAM members has sometimes been divisive, while this is generally less so between LVC and non-LVC ROPPA members in Africa. Despite its national-level members' affiliations, ROPPA has since its creation had an explicit stance on the preservation of its autonomy as a West African regional network, by not affiliating to any global articulation such as LVC or IFAP/WFO. Furthermore, COPROFAM is a member of the World Rural Forum (WRF), as are all ROPPA national-level members, although WRF's global network is different in nature to a global coordination of affiliated organisations such as LVC or WFO. Indeed, WRF is a Spanish NGO which has exercised a coordinating role in partnership with agrarian organisations of multiple affiliations on specific global campaigns, e.g. International Year and UN Decade on Family Farming (IYFF 2014 and UNDF 2019-2028) and related activities.

Figure 2: *ROPPA and West African Regional Integration*.²¹

COPROFAM and ROPPA are under-researched, and limited existing research does not compare them with each other, or with regional organisations outside their continents. Moreover, these few works are mostly in Spanish/Portuguese or French, restricting readership to their respective linguistic communities. Indeed, because these are predominantly non-anglophone zones, there are very few studies in English of these two regions in such understudied fields as agrarian organisations, let alone comparisons between them. But even in French, Spanish, and Portuguese, there is almost no comparative work between these two regions in any area of study, reflecting a generalized and persistent lack of mutual knowledge between both sides of the South Atlantic. This work aims to contribute in filling these gaps.

2.2.1.2 Applying comparative methods to regional policy processes

Comparative research in the social sciences tends to be most heuristic when focused on cases that are similar enough to be comparable, but different at least in the variables that one endeavours to investigate, since that allows for "the establishment of relationships among a few variables while many other variables are controlled" (Lijphart, 1971:687). COPROFAM and ROPPA have thus been selected because, in spite of their differences, they are sufficiently similar to be comparable, particularly in relation to the object of study: that is, their shared capacity to influence policy within their respective regions, through their participation in regional dialogue spaces, in the same fields of agricultural and rural development policy. It is because of these similarities (*constants*) that one can look at what is *variable* between the two cases: for the purpose of this study, their contrasting track records in influencing each of the three comparatively examined policies.

One of the limitations of selecting a 'region' or 'country' as macrosocial unit of comparison or 'comparator' (Ragin, 1987) is that it risks effacing internal variations within regions or countries, resulting in what Lijphart (1971) calls 'whole-nation bias' (which we can also apply to the regional scale). Indeed, a territory within one country may bear more (geographic, social,

²¹ Author's own elaboration. Graphics by Luísa Vieira.

cultural, economic) similarities with that of a neighbouring country, than to another territory within its own national jurisdiction. Without negating the importance of regional blocs or nations as significant political-economic entities in and of themselves, I seek to overcome the perils of 'whole-region bias' by integrating not only national but subnational dimensions of the studied regions into this comparative study, particularly through the identification of *regional agrarian territories* within each region (see maps in chapters 3 and 4).²²

Thus, regional integration can be understood firstly through local perceptions and affinities stretching across agrarian territories upon which national borders have been drawn as a result of historical contingencies. It can secondly be understood as intergovernmental opportunities for collaboration between neighbouring nations. And it can thirdly be observed as a conjunction of federalist efforts to generate supranational norms and policies, including systemic approaches that both supersede and encompass the previous two. Given that the peasant family farming policy agenda advocated by COPROFAM and ROPPA in regional invited spaces is to be implemented at all scales of governance (regional, national, local), these three understandings of the regional – transborder territories, neighbouring nations, and regional blocs – underpin my comparison. However, different combinations between these three understandings are shaped by the policy processes themselves. Hence, I propose to define the two regional comparators through their 'variable-geometries'.

Trade-offs between depth and breadth: regional comparators of variable geometry

Originally drawn from the field of design engineering to refer to machines whose parts can alter their shape to optimize efficiency depending on changing conditions, the expression 'variable-geometry' has also been used as a metaphor in the context of European regional

²² This is especially true regarding the transborder nature of such key elements of agrarian change as climate and soil, demographic density, or patterns of accumulation. For instance, middle family farmers of the Argentine temperate humid Pampa have more in common with many of their Uruguayan neighbours than with northern Argentine smaller-scale peasants of subtropical and dryland provinces. These in turn are more similar to Paraguayan and Bolivian peasants across the border than to their Pampa middle farmer compatriots. Similarly, coffee and cocoa producers of Côte d'Ivoire have more in common with their Ghanaian coastal counterparts, than with cotton producers at the Soudano-Sahelian northern drylands of those two countries. The latter, for their part, share more characteristics with southern Malian and Burkinabe cotton producers across those borders than with the former tropical coastal farmers.

integration. There, it denotes a flexible strategy to resolving differences between member countries that aim to regionally integrate at different degrees depending on the policy issue at stake (e.g. Schengen Area, Eurozone). I use the expression here as a methodological approach to comparing two regional blocs, to signify that the selections of countries (or combinations of sub-national examples) and degrees of depth with which I analyse them within each region vary according to the relevance of different national/subnational experiences for each policy process. I consider this variable-geometry approach to regional comparisons to be the most adapted to reconciling trade-offs between depth and breadth in a study where the regional, national, and local dimensions are so intricately connected. Indeed, "*scanning* all variables is not the same as *including* all variables" - the latter of which can result in "unrealistic and eventually self-defeating perfectionism" (Lijphart, 1971:690, original emphases).

Thus, I prioritize the most significant national and subnational member organisations within each regional platform, without losing sight of the regional organisation as a whole and its other members, weighing these according to their relative importance to tell each regional story. However, for these variable geometries of regional policy processes to be comparable, they must be of similar 'size', even if their shape may differ. For that reason, I have aimed to maintain similar numbers of country and subnational cases within each region for each policy process, to keep elements as constant as possible, and observe similarities and differences within the studied variables.

The 'fourth scale' of this study is the global level: the comparison is set against a common world-historical backdrop, whereby the two cases are "understood as relational parts of a singular (historically forming) phenomenon" (McMichael, 2000: 672). This underpins the time-scales applied to both cases. Hence, the historical chapters (3 and 4) follow the formation of the studied RAOs throughout the globally polarized deployment of monopoly (1870s-1970s) and monopoly-finance (1970s-present) capital (see section 2.1.3). More specifically, they look at political-economic cycles from the perspective of rural labouring classes and their peripheral states over the course of three consecutive international food regimes (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989; McMichael, 2009) spanning the i) 1870s-1930s, ii) 1930s-1970s and iii) 1970s-2010s. Yet the central comparison made by this thesis is between the two RAOs' trajectories over

the last three decades (1990s-2010s) in chapters dedicated to land (5), labour (6), and trade (7) policy, each of which examines one policy process across two different regions, and in their dialectical relationship with the dominant global policy agenda.

2.2.2 Field sites and data collection

2.2.2.1 Defining the field

Although this research is on agrarian organisations and policies that affect family farmers' livelihoods at the local level, the main focus is on spaces where those policies are negotiated – something that occurs at regional and national institutional venues, often hundreds or thousands of miles away from farmers' villages. This justified focusing the data collection process in the key cities where agrarian organisations are headquartered and where they meet with government officials. Moreover, adopting a 'multi-sited' fieldwork approach (Marcus, 1995) entailed prioritizing certain locations instead of others according to a variety of criteria, a key one of which was my asymmetrical knowledge of the two cases.

2.2.2.2 Asymmetrical knowledge of two cases and fieldwork

My prior knowledge of both cases was based on work I undertook during two years at the Brazilian Ministry of Agrarian Development's (MDA) International Office. It stemmed from my participation as government representative in REAF/MERCOSUR meetings and continuous engagement with involved actors for the first (South American) case. Additionally, it resulted from drafting a report and other complementary readings on West Africa's agricultural development strategy (ECOWAP/CAADP) for the second case. Given the six-month time constraint of my fieldwork (a requirement of my Brazilian scholarship), and unbalanced knowledge of the two cases, the best form of obtaining comparable data for both entailed prioritising the West African case. This methodological compromise was part of broader efforts to offset 'insider bias' (Hantrais, 2014:141) for the South American case, and compensate my 'outsider' lesser degree of knowledge of the West African case.

2.2.2.3 Rationale for specific sites within two cases: countries where data was collected and centrality of Brazil and Senegal

Two one-month field visits in South America were conducted at the end of 2016 and 2017 respectively, bookending a six-month field visit to West Africa conducted during March-September 2017. Fieldwork consisted more specifically in visits to Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Chile for case 1, and Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau for case 2. The pioneering and ultimately determinant weight of the Senegalese National Rurals' Council of Concertation and Cooperation (CNCR) in the building of ROPPA led me to prioritize data collection for the West African case in that country. Likewise, the central role of Brazil's MDA and COPROFAM's Brazilian member CONTAG (National Confederation of Workers in Agriculture) in the construction of the MERCOSUR regional agrarian policy dialogue meant a larger proportion of Brazilian actors were heard for the South American case.²³

Travel restrictions linked to instability in Mali and Burkina Faso at the time of fieldwork prevented field visits there, despite the crucial relevance of their national platforms for ROPPA. A field visit by road to the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau was facilitated by geographical proximity (see Figure 3) and constituted an opportunity to interview smaller non-francophone ROPPA

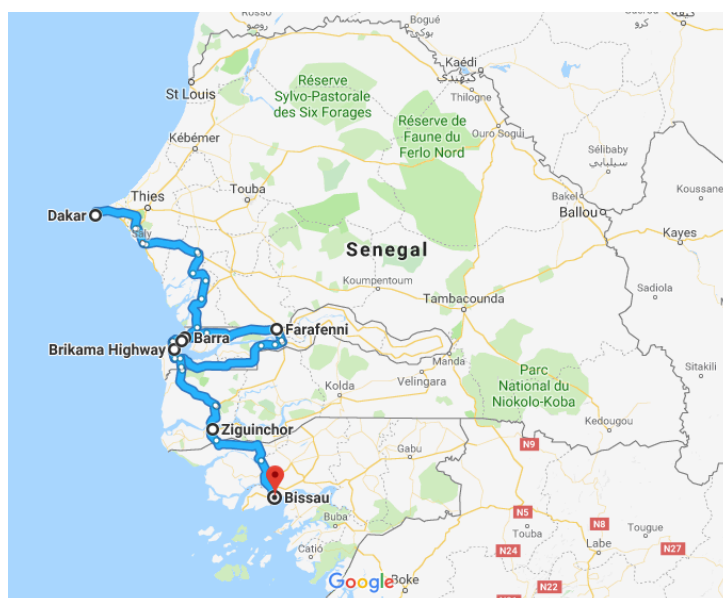


Figure 3: *West Africa Road Travel: Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau.*

²³ Interviewees from Senegal (14) and Brazil (17) represented over a third of the total number of respondents (79).

national-level organisations in the two neighbouring countries. Road travel also enabled to observe climatic transitions between Sahel, savannah, and humid tropical geographic zones across three contiguous countries, providing a significant observation site of agrarian transborder territories (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: *West Africa Road Travel: Sahel, savannah, and tropical landscapes*²⁴.
Photo credits: Fernando Ribeiro and author's own.

Reconstructing the various stages of the regional policy dialogue processes entailed combining the three qualitative research methods most frequently used in social movement

²⁴ Photos (enumerated from left to right, line by line) 1 and 2: Senegalese Sahel; 3: river Gambia crossing; 4 and 5: southern Gambian savannah; 6: Senegal's Casamance tropical region; 7, 8, and 9: Guinea-Bissau's tropical landscapes.

studies (Klandermans and Staggenborg, 2002), namely interviews, participant observation, and secondary sources.

2.2.2.4 Interviews

The adaptation time needed to immerse oneself into a completely new country – Senegal – meant the six-month period spent there initially seemed too short for the regional ambition of the comparative study. It was fortunately long enough to enable a comparable data collection process across the two regions in terms of: i) numbers of interviews (close to 40 per regional case, i.e. 83 in total); ii) a snowball sample of the two main categories of actors that this research focuses on, namely: a) regional agrarian organisation representatives, and b) civil servants from governments of the organisations' respective countries (plus one from each regional institution).

Significant inputs and insights also resulted from a smaller sample in each region of: c) researchers and technical experts and d) staff from international organisations – chiefly among which UN agencies and INGOs – involved in agrarian regional policy processes.

Respondents' work usually spanned two scales of policy formulation: national and regional. Many were also active in global policy processes. Most interviewees were agrarian organisation leaders and civil servants who have taken part in the three studied policy processes in South America and West Africa during the past two decades. Actors were categorised across both organisational category and region (see table 2 below).

REGIONS	AGRARIAN ORGANISATIONS	GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS	RESEARCH CENTRES	INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	TOTAL
SOUTH AMERICA	10	26	2	3	41
WEST AFRICA	21	9	4	4	38
TOTAL	31	35	6	7	79

Table 2: *Numbers of interviewees according to organisational category and region.*

The 83 semi-directed interviews (four of the 79 respondents accepted to be interviewed twice) dedicated varying degrees of time and importance to: i) historical perspectives agrarian

organisations' formation, and their participation in South American and West African agrarian policy, often weaved through interviewees' own life histories; ii) discussions on agrarian organisation inroads and challenges in influencing contemporary policies, usually through the examination of specific cases within the wider issues concerning peasant family farmers' negotiation of land, labour, and trade policies. In both cases, respondents' accounts of COPROFAM or ROPPA's policy influence made frequent reference to their specific national member organisations, of which interviewees were either leaders, technical advisors, or partners with whom they had worked closely as government officials, researchers, international development agency or INGO staff.

2.2.2.5 Participant observation

This research is focused on spaces of democratic deliberation that are usually restricted to government and agrarian organisation representatives. Yet these often also allow in some of their partners in international organisations and academia. Taking part in those discussions as a legitimate actor falling into the latter category was a precondition for gaining access to the diverse meetings in which deliberations took place, in order to engage in participant observation. Indeed, some degree of participation in the activities of respondents is an intrinsic part of fieldwork, if only to enable researchers to observe and collect data in environments of more or less restricted access (Holy, 1984).

Additional encounters at the sidelines of official events can be at least as important as the events themselves, whether these are civil society ('claimed/created'), government delegation only ('closed') meetings (Gaventa, 2006), or more informal small group and one-on-one conversations. In this sense, criteria for participating in events were not just based on themes discussed, but also on the people attending these. This led me to global venues such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and WTO headquarters, where I was able to meet several key informants - including former and current COPROFAM and ROPPA leaders - and interview them on the sidelines of the official proceedings.

Regional policy dialogues I participated in included a ROPPA workshop on Rural Youth in West Africa in Dakar, Senegal (September 2017) and the 27th edition of MERCOSUR's Specialised

Meeting on Family Farming in Florianopolis, Brazil (XXVII REAF, December 2017). I also took part in a meeting of Uruguay's REAF National Section bringing together agrarian organisations and government representatives discussing local, national, and regional policies in Montevideo (November 2016). At the global level, I attended the CFS 43rd and 44th sessions (October 2016 and 2017) at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. I also attended the WTO Public Forum (September 2017) in Geneva, Switzerland, where ROPPA President of Honour Mamadou Cissokho co-organised and spoke at one of the panels.

The immersion process in the West African field site crucially involved working as research associate at the Agricultural and Rural Prospective Initiative²⁵ (IPAR), a Senegalese think tank focused on West African agrarian issues, which has ROPPA representatives in its governing board. Participating as a researcher in IPAR enabled me to have a first-hand experience with West African researchers, and through them, to meet members of agrarian organisations and government from the region. The work experience at IPAR greatly facilitated access to key ROPPA leaders and other interviewees in environments of mutual trust, just as it created spontaneous occasions for enlightening informal conversations with West African researchers in the workplace itself.

Observation became more 'participant' on the occasions in which I was asked to contribute with simultaneous translation, such as with a Bissau-Guinean ROPPA representative who requested to speak in Portuguese at the previously mentioned ROPPA workshop in Dakar (which only had French-English official interpretation). More generally, I acted as informal interpreter between COPROFAM and ROPPA delegates, as part of my facilitation of bilateral meetings between them on the sidelines of global events, which gradually enabled a bilateral partnership to take shape between the two organisations.

A mid- to long-term cooperation project between ROPPA and COPROFAM emerged from my work at IPAR. Given my previous work experience in South America and contacts with FAO and IFAD colleagues who had long been interested in facilitating exchanges between regional agrarian organisations, I suggested to IPAR's executive director, Dr. Cheikh Oumar Ba, that we

²⁵ *Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale.*

bridge each others' networks to foster cooperation between ROPPA and COPROFAM, which he enthusiastically supported from the outset.

I organised an initial meeting between the two organisations, IPAR, and FAO, at the latter's Rome headquarters in October 2017, but attempts to secure FAO funding subsequently faltered. A second attempt was made in May 2019, at a meeting on the sidelines of FAO and IFAD's launch of UNDF (2019-2028), where funding was obtained to enable participation of COPROFAM and ROPPA representatives at a joint workshop organised at CONTAG headquarters in Brasilia, in November 2019. The resulting *COPROFAM and ROPPA International Meeting: Building Common Actions for Peasant and Family Farming* became an opportunity to present preliminary findings from this research, identifying potential areas of common interest for mutual collaboration. The event yielded a protocol between the two organisations, as well as a draft project document to secure funding for future joint exchanges (see Figure 5 below).



Figure 5: *Photo of COPROFAM-ROPPA meeting, Brasilia, November 2019.*
Source: COPROFAM website²⁶.

²⁶ Photo located at following link: <https://coprofam.org/2019/11/14/roppa-y-coprofam-concluyen-la-reunion-en-brasilia-con-referencias-para-los-proximos-pasos-de-trabajo/>.

2.2.2.6 Secondary sources

Official documents from MERCOSUR and ECOWAS (e.g. regional policy norms and regulations) as well as from national governments (e.g. agricultural policy documents) and agrarian organisations (e.g. final declarations of meetings, official position statements, open letters) were consulted. This included secondary sources produced by COPROFAM and ROPPA, as well as by their national-level affiliated organisations. Their own websites and social network pages, which include online newsletters, interview transcripts, position papers, meeting declarations and minutes constituted an important source of documentation. Online videos with interviews, speeches, and presentations by key COPROFAM and ROPPA leaders and their interlocutors in government, academia, and international organisations were also consulted.

2.2.2.7 From data collection do data analysis

Whether collected as i) recorded verbal accounts in semi-structured interviews and life stories; ii) notes of speeches, statements, and informal reflections voiced by key actors observed during my participation in policy dialogue meetings; or iii) contextual and analytical secondary sources, the data brought back from fieldwork provided me with a rich pool of contrasting and coinciding information, opinions, and analyses. Over the course of fieldwork, but also during the subsequent interview transcription process, a constant verification in secondary sources (local press, research publications) of facts mentioned by respondents revealed complementary information. Indeed, interviewees are usually speaking from memory, and can give replies that are at times approximate (especially when referring to remote past events). Yet these were most often sufficient for me to reconstitute essential pieces of policy processes with additional secondary sources, on which I most likely would not have stumbled upon had the interviews not taken place.

Moreover, just as civil servants will often recite official government narratives, members of agrarian organisations frequently give favourable accounts that defend their organisations' legacies, and may sometimes even paint a rosy picture that effaces internal contradictions. These discursive practices can hardly come as a surprise as they emanate from actors representing sectors of society that have been historically marginalised, and for whom presenting alternative

narratives is part and parcel of their work. Their assertiveness, particularly as expressed through vigorous interventions in plenary meetings, was usually revelatory of issues in which peasant knowledge and prior internal deliberations among organisations are often particularly relevant in finding robust policy solutions to lingering problems, yet are all too often ignored by intergovernmental actors. I was equally attentive to conspicuous omissions, or manifestations of unease by some respondents faced by certain questions. Indeed, what is and what is not said, and the varied degrees of emphasis given to different subjects, may reflect not just contrasting perceptions and blind spots of each respondent, but also potentially divisive or polemical issues that respondents prefer to avoid. These led me to further triangulate and combine sources in ways that sometimes revealed the reasons for unease or diversion in some interviewees' responses, as part of my search for patterns of discourse that reinforce or weaken broader territorial class alliances.

Though interviews broadly followed pre-determined series of questions, the above types of situations often led me to further interrogate interview respondents and policy dialogue participants on some of the issues that had come up in preceding interviews, and later search for complementary data in secondary sources, thus triangulating both within a single method (amongst different interviewees) as well as between methods (participant observation, secondary sources) (Hantrais, 2014). Complementing claims (or indeed avoidances) that surprised me enabled me to further substantiate counter-intuitive findings when their accuracy and relevance was confirmed through triangulation.

The data collection process was enriched not only by obtaining 'popular language' and 'technical jargon' versions from respondents of different backgrounds, but also by the contrasting nature of viewpoints of actors from different countries of a same region. It was often this purposive search for contrasting perceptions and narratives of a given phenomenon by a multitude of actors – what Olivier de Sardan (2008) calls 'complex triangulation'²⁷ – that led me to uncover some of the most revealing tensions and paradoxes of the studied policy processes.

²⁷ As opposed to 'simple triangulation' consisting in merely verifying the veracity of information by combining different sources (Olivier de Sardan, 2008).

2.2.3 Positionality and reflexivity

Situating my research within an 'agrarian scholar-activist' perspective, in that it aims to produce rigorous academic work that can contribute to meaningful social change (Borras, 2016), particularly regarding agrarian organisations' policy agency, entails not shying away from critically engaging with the actors that one endeavours to support. In other words, constructive criticism of organisations' limitations can be just as crucial for their growth and survival as is a faithful recognition of their efforts. That said, efforts to faithfully reflect fault lines and contradictions have been set against equal efforts to evaluate their potential sensitivity for involved actors and their organisations.

On the rare occasions when interviewees have asked to speak off the record in parts of interviews, or whenever the nature of what is being discussed is delicate, references to respondents have been anonymized. In most cases, particularly that of prominent agrarian organisation and government representatives whose public discourse is in tune with the cited allocutions, I have cited them with their real names, as a way of giving voice to actors whose discourse is most often rendered invisible by powerful competing forces. In most other cases, as with technical assistants of agrarian organisations, or mid-level civil servants, I refer to interviewees solely by their professional occupation and country of origin.

Conducting qualitative social science fieldwork in the Global South served to demonstrate on more than one occasion the potentially counter-productive nature of instruments such as consent forms which in their original contexts (such as natural science research in the Global North) might be well-suited to safeguard the rights of respondents during fieldwork, but taken outside of them may backfire and risk breaking fragile informal trust building processes between researchers and respondents. In South American field sites, where interviewees either knew me previously or had been referred to me through close colleagues, signing consent forms became a mere formality.

In the West African case, however, where I was essentially an outsider, initially without the backing of a host institution, the awkward bureaucratic handing of consent forms for signature prior to interviews (regardless of the fact that the forms' content essentially protected respondents' rights) in some cases made interviewees uneasy and distrustful. This only

reinforced the fundamental importance of working with a locally-embedded host institution. IPAR's researchers, who have been working closely with ROPPA for more than a decade, generously helped me to reach out, build trust, and engage in rich discussions with key ROPPA actors and their allies in government, academia, and international organisations.

As mentioned above, a prominent feature of interviews conducted in both South America and West Africa, (particularly with older, more experienced interviewees), was the frequent reference to past historical periods that were crucial for the formation of present-day RAOs and their policy claims. The significance of these recorded verbal accounts (and secondary source investigations that accompanied them) only reinforced my conviction of the importance of understanding COPROFAM and ROPPA through its formative roots. Indeed, following Braudel's (1958) conceptualisation of the *longue durée*, the insertion of contemporary social phenomena into their long-term historical contexts allows social scientists to gain an otherwise inaccessible perspective and depth for their present-day inquiries. The following two chapters aim to do this by looking at the origins of COPROFAM (chapter 3) and ROPPA (chapter 4) over the course of the 20th century.

Chapter 3: Agrarian Organisations in South America

Introduction

This chapter examines the origins of COPROFAM, by looking at key formative moments of its national-level agrarian organisations throughout the 20th century, as well as their coalescing into a regional network in the 1990s-2000s. Drawing primarily on evidence from leaders, members and close collaborators of five of these – the Argentine Agrarian Federation (FAA), Uruguay's, National Commission for Rural Promotion (CNFR), Brazil's CONTAG, Paraguay's National Peasant Organisation (ONAC), and the United Chilean Peasants and Indigenous Peoples' Movement (MUCECH)²⁸ – as well as secondary sources, it traces policy claims and dialogues by looking at how these have enabled to unite various rural class fractions spread across different agrarian territories of the South American Southern Cone.

The regional agrarian organisation's wider origins have been thus described by former Uruguayan agriculture (1990-1993) and foreign (1995-1998) minister, later head of IFAD's Regional Coordination Unit for the MERCOSUR region and key COPROFAM supporter, Álvaro Ramos:

Andean countries, countries of northern South America, Central America and the Caribbean, [had] very strong peasant movements [...] a social force with much more influence on national policies than in [the Southern Cone]. Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil's three southern states which comprise a relatively homogenous region had what was called 'small and medium agricultural production'. [These] were like a relapse of producers who did not manage to access market conditions [...]. They never had specific policies, as peasant movements of other Latin American regions sometimes did, given their social mobilisation, numerous contingents, and impacts on rural realities of those countries. [The latter] had much more strength than in this [Southern Cone] region. [...] Brazil always has two or three [agrarian] faces, at least. The most well-known one [in Uruguay] is the southern one, which is part of this *platense* [i.e. Plata River basin] zone, of the humid Pampa [...]. Then there is the Northeast face, as well as the Amazon one. [All three] are quite distinct.²⁹

I distinguish three broad types of rural class fractions, from within and across the subregion's five countries (see map in Figure 6 below): i) relatively more capitalised small and medium producers

²⁸ The choice of focusing on these rather than other member organisations reflects a concern for examining those that were most influential in COPROFAM's foundation, and that have the biggest weight in both their national contexts and within the regional platform. A comprehensive, regionalised account of all of COPROFAM's national member organisations has yet to be written, but falls outside the scope of this thesis.

²⁹ Interview IR-SA1.

located in or near temperate zones (e.g. wider Pampa region formed by eastern Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil); ii) small-scale peasants and agricultural wage labourers mostly living on drylands, savannahs, and subtropical humid zones (e.g. Brazil's Northeast, eastern Paraguay and northern Argentina's Humid Chaco); iii) indigenous and traditional peoples and communities in their various territories (e.g. Brazilian Amazon, Chilean Araucanía).



Figure 6: *South American Regional Agrarian Territories*³⁰.

³⁰ Author's own design, partly based on FAO, 2001. Graphics by Luísa Vieira.

This categorisation stems from the three main constituencies represented in COPROFAM's self-identification of its membership base as *peasant and indigenous family farmers*. Following a chronological succession of South American political-economic cycles in interaction with three successive Global North-centred global food regimes (McMichael, 2009), the chapter focuses chiefly on the small and medium producer organisational formation under the first period (1870s-1930s), the peasant base under the second (1930s-1970s), and the merging of all three constituencies as COPROFAM under the third food regime (1970s-2010s).

3.1. Formation of national agrarian organisations in South America's Southern Cone

3.1.1 Small and medium family farmers in the Humid Pampa: FAA and CNFR

3.1.1.1 Migrant agrarian colonies in temperate zones under modernist governments

The Southern Cone's specificity within the diverse agrarian landscape of Latin America and the Caribbean is often represented by its temperate small and medium producer zone, predominantly settled by Europeans through state-sponsored agrarian colonies in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. FAA, COPROFAM's most ancient member organisation, stemmed from Italian and Spanish migrant tenant farmers' struggles for better working and land tenancy conditions in the Argentine Pampa. The movement was led by *chacareros*³¹ from Santa Fé province, with the help of priests, lawyers, and local tradesmen. Pests inflicted great losses in 1911, so that when the following plentiful harvest did not translate into equivalent gains in working and tenancy conditions, *chacareros* mobilized in protest, declaring a general strike on 25 June 1912 in the southern Santa Fé town of Alcorta. Subsequently celebrated as the organisation's founding act, the *Grito de Alcorta*³² was a tenant farmers' assembly that approved a list of demands, including indexing rental prices as a capped percentage of harvest gains, and making tenancy contracts last for a minimum of three years. Over 100.000 farmers from the provinces of Santa Fé, Córdoba, Entre Ríos, Buenos Aires, and La Pampa joined the strike, disrupting the country's agricultural

³¹ As small and medium scale tenant farmers are referred to in Argentina. In 1911, tenant farmers represented 68% of total farmers in the province of Buenos Aires, 62% in Santa Fe and Entre Ríos, and 72% in Córdoba, and worked on plots of around 150 to 200 ha (Solberg, 1971).

³² Cry of Alcorta.

activities for three months. Despite police repression and imprisonment, local *chacareros* assemblies spread across the region, constituting the backbone for what officially became FAA on 1 August 1912 (Solberg, 1971).

Uruguay's CNFR was created in 1915, with a similar southern European migrant family farmer base. The country's economy was dominated by extensive cattle-ranching and exports of meat, leather, and wool, with approximately 90% of rural land dedicated to these activities, and 10% to grow crops in smaller plots on the country's southern and western edges (the bulk of Uruguay's arable lands and cradle of CNFR). As its former President Fernando López recalled³³:

The origins were in the first *sociedades de fomento*,³⁴ which started in 1911, 1912. Several of these, [...] mainly made up of migrants [sprung up near] train stations, built by the English [...]. These were important points of concentration: where the train stopped [...], the villages were [located], and some roads [had been built], as there were no other existing paths. The first *sociedades de fomento*, around [the Departments of] Colonia, some in Canelones, eight or nine of them, in Minas, Lavalleja, held an assembly and created CNFR in 1915. This organisation, in a way, was the first that attempted to confront the traditional model of rural organisations linked to large landowners: the *Asociación Rural de Uruguay* (ARU) – which is over 120 years old [...] and still exists – and *Federación Rural*, created more or less at the same time as us. But basically CNFR was the organisation that represented the 'other' agriculture, not that of large landowners.

Brazil's southern region had developed close economic, social and cultural links with neighbouring Uruguay and Argentina's eastern provinces over the previous centuries. This greater Pampa region was contested between Spanish and Portuguese colonial Empires and subsequent independent nation-states, given its strategic access to the Plata River mouth (Moniz Bandeira, 2006). By the early 20th century, agrarian class alliances were closely interwoven with common political-ideological influences:

The doctrine of the *Partido Republicano Rio-Grandense* [PRR, which ruled Rio Grande do Sul – RS state during the 1893-1929 period] was composed of ideas directly inspired from the political credo of Auguste Comte. [...] The same ideas encompassed the statist projects of the Uruguayan *Colorados*, whose leader, President Jorge Batlle, learned about Pierre Laffitte's Comtism in the same meetings at *Rue Monsieur-le-Prince* that [Brazilian positivist] Miguel Lemos had attended in the early 1880s. Similar values were present in the *Radical* [political party] program of Hipólito Yrigoyen, president of Argentina in 1916. [...] Rio Grande do Sul, Uruguay, and Argentina, notwithstanding differences of scale, were similar socio-economic formations. In all three, the livestock export economy, firmly implanted throughout the 19th century, had to confront [...] the smaller but dynamic alternative of polyculture oriented towards the internal market and new urban activities in industry and services. Hardworking farmers devoid of official credit, small and medium industrialists established in the larger cities, and a growing class of wage earners arriving

³³ Interview AO-SA1.

³⁴ Local associations to support agricultural production and commercialisation.

from European migration waves constituted poles of necessity that were not unfrequently opposed to those of the old livestock ranchers (Bosi, 1993:280).

Slavery (until abolition in 1888) and large-scale *latifundia* were more pervasive in the southern half of Rio Grande do Sul state,³⁵ while its north-eastern quarter (e.g. *Serra Gaúcha* mountain range, *Alto Uruguai* river valley) became increasingly associated with small and medium farming colonies mostly formed by Italian and German migrants (Herédia, 2001). Land colonisation schemes gave these small plots to farm, later enabling them to sell surpluses to expanding middle class markets in cities of Brazil's South during the early 20th century.

While in Argentina's Pampa region, the genocide and marginalisation of indigenous peoples during the westward *Campaña del Desierto* in the 1880s made way for the acquisition of very large land estates, particularly by Irish and Basque settlers, Italian migrants settled mostly in urban areas (especially Buenos Aires). However, some Italian colonies of small-scale farms were formed in the eastern and central provinces of Santa Fé and Córdoba, as well as western Mendoza (Saéz, 2001). Migrant colonies created strong and durable links with Argentine internal markets. Hence, while the country still imported wheat to feed its population in 1874, self-sufficiency for this grain had been achieved by 1880, as a result of rising production in Santa Fé and Entre Ríos (Petrocelli, 2009). Agrarian colonies of Brazil and Argentina's temperate zones thus became emblematic of the small and medium producer base that was to found COPROFAM almost a century later.

While the disproportionate economic and political might of South American rural oligarchies ruled out meaningful redistributive land reform, other land policy instruments were devised by the new generation of positivist statesmen from Rio Grande do Sul, Uruguay and Argentina mentioned in Bosi's (1993) quote above. Taxation was a key policy device used by both the PRR administrations in RS and the *Colorado* party in Uruguay. A progressive territorial land tax, from which small plots were exempted, instituted by RS state governor Borges de Medeiros (1898-1908, 1913-1928) in 1902 was the first of its kind in Brazil (Buccelli, 2016). In parallel, the price of unproductive lands for acquisition by new landholders was considerably reduced through

³⁵ Interview with former MDA minister (2003-2006, 2014) and Rio Grande do Sul Vice-Governor (1998-2002) Miguel Rossetto (Interview CS-SA26).

a decrease in taxation of *land sales*: hence, "the unproductive [landholder] paid a lot of tax, and transmitted it below its [actual] value. This [unified] the *Castilhismo*³⁶ culture of the republicans, with this family farming base".³⁷ Former public lands which had been illegally grabbed by extensive cattle-ranchers were also coercively taken back by Brazilian southern state authorities during the same period (Bosi, 1993).

South of the Chuí river, the governing coalition of Uruguay's reformist President José Batlle y Ordoñez (1903-1907, 1911-1915) attempted to use similar land policy instruments to shift state support towards more intensive small-scale agricultural and livestock production, against predominance of the extensive *latifundio*. The more radical wing of *Batllismo* tried to pass bills in parliament to confiscate public lands from the hands of the rural oligarchy back to the state (as in neighbouring RS), or directly expropriate large unproductive landholdings for redistribution and conversion to intensive farming. Despite resistance from the cattle-ranching *latifundista* lobby to these bills, the second Batlle administration managed to implement a progressive land tax (Maubrigades, 2009) paralleling the RS experience (Bosi, 1993). President Batlle said in a public speech in 1903:

Property, in reality, should not belong to anyone, or, better said, it should belong to all [...]. The owners of our lands are a limited number of people and our peasants have to work for them for an infinitely low monthly wage, while these [lands] make great fortunes [...]. Progressive land tax, that is, a tax that becomes higher as the value of land increases, makes the interest in owning large properties decrease if they do not employ them in a way that produces extraordinary utilities (Batlle, 1969, cited by Maubrigades, 2009:12).

Paraguay was unable to implement such reformist agrarian policy due to severe destruction and loss of 80% of its male population in the Triple Alliance War (1864-1870), and to its landlocked position. The Paraguayan government managed to float bonds on the London stock market in the 1870s to stimulate European migrant agricultural colonisation schemes. However, "the incapacity to honour payments for the London bonds and the spectacular failure of the first migrant settlements would shatter any hopes of imitating, even in part, the model of the

³⁶ The term *Castilhismo* is in reference to Júlio de Castilhos: first governor of Rio Grande do Sul state after the Proclamation of the Republic (1889), he was the main positivist *gaúcho* leader who almost single-handedly drafted the modernizing RS state Constitution of 1891, and paved the way for subsequent governors Borges de Medeiros and Getúlio Vargas. Vargas would later become Brazil's longest serving Head of State in the 20th century (1930-1945, 1950-1954), and its most influential political figure during its developmentalist heyday of 1930-1964.

³⁷ Interview CS-SA26.

Southern neighbours" (Herken, 2011:24-25). By the early 1880s, a large-scale sale of public lands had enlarged the *latifundio* land structure in a similar way as the Westward expansion of the Argentine agricultural frontier (*Ibid*).

3.1.1.2 State-promoted wide rural labouring class alliance in Perón's Argentina

The relationship of FAA's members to Argentine agricultural workers in its formative years illustrates the difficulties and pitfalls of worker-peasant-middle class alliances, which tend to be tested in times of economic strife. The tenant farmers of the humid Pampa region, who usually relied on their own labour force, also hired seasonal migrant agricultural workers during yearly harvests. Influenced by anarcho-syndicalist ideals brought by Italian and Spanish migrants, the first Argentine agricultural labour unions sprang simultaneously to FAA, and voiced demands for twelve-hour shifts (as opposed to the excruciating sixteen daily work hours), and better wages in the face of their sharp decline after World War I (WWI). Following rejection, rural workers went on strike in December 1919 (Solberg, 1971). However, rather than closing ranks with labourers suffering similar repression that they had endured when pressing for better tenancy conditions, FAA's newspaper *La Tierra* defended the government's repressive measures and joined landed elites' and mainstream press attempts to delegitimize the agricultural workers' movement by blaming the unrest on outside agitators, thereby reproducing a type of accusation that had often been directed by the same dominant sectors to FAA in their own strikes (*Ibid*)³⁸.

Conversely, FAA's collaborative relationship with president Juan Domingo Perón's developmentalist project in the 1940s and 1950s shows how broad alliances are not just the result of narrowly perceived class interests depending on each conjuncture, but can also be built through government-mediated participatory deliberation and negotiation. Perón's administrations (1946-1955), which had as their essential support base the national industrial sector and urban working class, also sought to promote the interests of both rural workers and

³⁸ That is not to say that FAA's membership was unanimous in this approach, as illustrated by some of the organisation's links to the small but actively militant Socialist Party, as well as the existence of a more radical wing within its ranks, which represented a challenge to the organisation's leadership up until the 1930s (Solberg, 1971). Moreover, FAA did negotiate agreements with some agricultural worker unions such as FORA (Catalá, 2007).

small and medium farmers. Hence, Perón approved the Rural Worker's Statute³⁹ (1944) when he was still Secretary of Labour, providing agricultural workers with an unprecedented recognition of economic and social rights.

Established by decree in 1944 and ratified by Congress during Perón's first presidential mandate in 1947, the Rural Worker's Statute was a milestone in Argentina's labour legislation, comparable to Brazil's 1963 equivalent law (see section 3.1.2). Indeed, legally enshrining modern labouring rights (e.g. minimum wage, shelter, Sunday rest, paid leave) for the urban working class was one thing. Extending these to the country's entire rural territory, which *latifundio* oligarchies considered to be *de facto* under their own jurisdiction (typically under paternalistic semi-feudal labour relations), rather than by a nationally enforced labour code, was an entirely different matter. This was to generate fierce resistance by landed elites against Perón (Rouquié, 1982). Yet the rural labour law was also initially opposed by FAA.⁴⁰

In a speech to FAA in 1947, Perón explained the rationale for creating the Argentine Institute of Promotion and Exchange (IAPI), which would provide the necessary fiscal space for the *Justicialista* governments' wider rural labouring class unity strategy:

There is an economic cycle that the country must respect, which is production, industrialisation, commercialisation, and consumption. The state must, therefore, link together these four operations. This chain-linking implies giving a national solution to the agrarian problem (El Ciudadano y la Región, 2015: 1).

By 'nationalising' agricultural trade, Perón meant regulating agricultural exports by ensuring agricultural producer prices were set by the state as unique purchaser of all commodities before they were processed and/or exported. This enabled to guarantee revenues for small and medium producers, whose vulnerability to international price volatility was much higher than that of larger-scale exporters. The resulting national price regulating and processing system could capture "differential agrarian rent", understood "not as the product of an individual or social group's 'effort', but [...] as the exceptional climate and soil conditions of [Argentina's] Pampa zone and high international food prices" (El Ciudadano y la Región, 2015: 1). Indeed, despite Argentina's tremendous agricultural export growth during WWII, fiscal resources were constrained, given concentrated appropriation of agrarian rent through private control of storage

³⁹ *Estatuto del Peón Rural*.

⁴⁰ Interview CS-SA-13.

and transport infrastructure networks (ports, silos, railroads) and financing mechanisms by Argentina's rural oligarchies and foreign capital. Reclaiming public regulation of production, transport, and distribution through IAPI's chain-link coordination allowed for the economic surplus related to favourable agricultural conditions and concentrated land ownership of the Pampa region to be reinvested to a much wider pool of beneficiaries on a national scale.⁴¹

The policy implications of managing IAPI's captured agrarian rent against competing rural interests were negotiated through participatory policy mechanisms created during Perón's tenure. FAA obtained that IAPI would compensate *chacareros* if prices fell below previously negotiated amounts. IAPI's subsidized compensations enabled family farmers to both maintain social reproduction conditions *and* pay for agricultural workers' wage increases despite declines in producer prices. Producer price setting involved intense participation and negotiation between FAA delegates and public authorities in local assemblies. This measure was fundamental to reduce tensions between small and medium agricultural producers and wage labourers. Moreover, whereas the state had made the hiring of temporary agricultural labourers for harvesting work compulsory, this changed under FAA pressure, after a 1949 norm allowed producers' to alternately use their own family labour in order to minimize production costs (Olivera, 2002).

Different policy spaces in which FAA participated under Perón's governments included the state agricultural research institution,⁴² employer-worker collective negotiation commissions,⁴³ and local councils to facilitate access to credit for cooperatives.⁴⁴ The latter were usually located at the local offices of Argentina's main public bank (*Banco Nación*), and composed by members of cooperatives, FAA, and civil servants from the ministry of Agriculture and *Banco Nación*. Differently from the urban and rural labour movements that gave full political support to the Peronista administrations of 1946-1955, FAA made a point of maintaining its political autonomy. Yet it grew significantly in capillarity, partly as a result of its cooperatives' system

⁴¹ IAPI's fortunes were to be short-lived, however. The state agency was gradually deprived of its policy-making capacities from the mid-1950s following Perón's overthrow, and eventually extinguished in 1991 (El Ciudadano y la Región, 2015).

⁴² *Consejo de Investigaciones Agrícolas*.

⁴³ *Comisiones Paritarias de Trabajo Asalariado*.

⁴⁴ *Centros Regionales de Cooperación Agraria*.

strengthening, through participation in local policy negotiation assemblies and councils promoted under Perón's governments (Olivera, 2002). Thus "the quantity of local sections, individual members, affiliated cooperatives, volumes of production that [FAA member] organisations managed was vertiginously multiplied" (*Ibid*:135).

Perón's administration also made efforts to bolster the pre-existing National Agrarian Council,⁴⁵ which was tasked with planning and undertaking an agrarian reform (an FAA demand). The social function of land property (SFLP) was a prominent concept in Latin American legal debates from at least the early 1930s, as exemplified by its inclusion in a draft version of Brazil's 1934 Constitution promoted by president Getúlio Vargas (Guimarães, Medeiros, 1997) and its endorsement in Argentina's short-lived 1949-1955 Constitution⁴⁶. Indeed, "most Latin American Constitutions had incorporated the social function of property" by the mid-20th century (Etchichury, 2019:1023). The concept struck a moderate reformist balance between legally upholding private property while curbing its excesses to benefit the common good through state regulation.

It was particularly promoted by the Catholic Church's social doctrine in defence of redistributive agrarian reform (Prunotto, 1984), but as a softer, more 'acceptable' alternative to the abolition of private property advocated by Communist parties and their rural wings. Given that much of South America's rural movements have roots across both progressive Catholic and Communist or Socialist parties' tendencies, SFLP emerged in public debates on land policy as a key discursive frame. In a document summarizing FAA's position on land policy issues, its author explicitly refers to the Catholic Church's social doctrine to substantiate his defence of 'integral agrarian reform'. This includes a citation of Pope John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* (1961)⁴⁷ stating that "private property naturally has an intrinsic social function", and that anyone that benefits from it "must necessarily execute it to their own benefit and to that of others" (Prunotto, 1984:3). Calling for "preventing parasitic speculation on the soil" and the "necessity for a more just

⁴⁵ *Consejo Agrario Nacional*.

⁴⁶ Interview CS-SA27.

⁴⁷ A document which later had an important influence on Liberation Theology-inspired rural movements (see section 3.1.3 below).

distribution of land property", FAA reaffirmed that "land property has an individual function and a social function" (*Ibid*:14).

Uruguay's CNFR also prioritised SFLP from at least the 1940s, when it pushed for state-sponsored land colonisation in favour of its small and medium producer base. CNFR members often state this as a landmark in the organisation's history when speaking of contemporary struggles for equitable land distribution. As stated by CNFR and COPROFAM former president Fernando López (2008:2) "In Uruguay, the [land] Colonisation law was brought about by our organisation after [it organized] a congress on the social function of land in 1945" leading to the creation of the National Colonisation Institute (INC) in 1948. Despite many attempts to extinguish the institute since then, "CNFR has always remained very alert on this theme and held intense negotiations and mobilisations that prevented its extinction" (*Ibid*). However modest they may have been, concrete gains made in terms of access to land for family farmers in latifundia-dominated Argentina and Uruguay have usually resulted from actions discursively justified by SFLP principles.

Despite the lack of significant expropriation for land redistribution, frustrating initial expectations of Argentina's National Agrarian Council and FAA pressures for agrarian reform, Perón did introduce a land price freeze to generate what he dubbed a "tranquil [agrarian] reform" (Tifni, 2018:15). This contributed to eventually consolidate most of FAA's tenant farmers into propertied small and medium producers. In the words of a former ministry of Agriculture civil servant:

Federación Agraria is over 100 years old and its origins are precisely in the struggle for land, for tenancy [conditions]. The people [...] who are today in *Federación Agraria* in many cases *became* large[r-scale farmers]. Because in Argentina, although there was no agrarian reform, there was a long period of land tenancy price freeze [from the 1940s to 1960s]. This meant that [...] the [land rental] business became uninteresting for landowners and enabled tenants to purchase. It enabled a large number of producers to gain access to land. Not in the central nucleus of the *Pampa Húmeda*, but in other places, for instance western Buenos Aires province, many places like that [...]. A large number of tenants became landowners. These are basically *Federación Agraria* members. Besides others who are [still] tenants [as they were] in the early 20th century, when the struggle for land began.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Interview CS-SA8.

Yet Perón's land price freeze begun in 1948 (Tifni, 2018) signalled a tactical retreat, as it replaced a previously more radical stance on agrarian reform. The interruption of land colonisations and *latifundio* expropriations that year (Balsa, 2012) coincided with rising inflation and signs of Argentina's increasing dependency on the US⁴⁹, whilst Europe under Marshall Plan conditions considerably reduced its Argentine food imports (Moniz Bandeira, 1995). Even at its height, industrial policy in Argentina stopped short of generating a heavy industrial goods production capacity. This was partly achieved in Brazil, but neither country managed to produce capital goods at sufficient scale. Correspondingly, Argentina's internal market (emerging middle classes and industrial workforce) barely constituted a sufficiently wide domestic demand pool for industrialisation (de Janvry, 1981). Moreover, the US did not depend on meat and wheat imports like the UK, and thus could impose its conditions on Argentina more forcefully than Britain under the previous (first) food regime (Moniz Bandeira, 1995; Frank, 1970; Balsa, 2012).

Resumption of economic growth in Europe with Marshall Plan funds and increased production of grains by the US since the 1930s engendered full deployment of the second food regime by the late 1940s and early 1950s, characterized by overproduction in the centre and dumping of surpluses (often in the form of 'food aid') in peripheral countries (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989; Moyo and Yeros, 2005). Under the 1954 *Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act*, US surpluses of wheat, corn, rice, cotton, tobacco were sold below market prices across the periphery, particularly in Latin American countries (which, excluding Argentina and Uruguay, are net wheat importers) (de Janvry, 1981). Thus, the interim conservative Brazilian government of João Café Filho that followed Getúlio Vargas' suicide (1954) negotiated the Wheat Agreement with the US, which greatly "augmented their participation in the proportion of [Brazilian] imports from 9% in 1955 to 38% in 1956 while Argentina's fell from 91% to 62%" (Moniz Bandeira, 1995:95). This attended both US interests and those of the Argentine opposition to Perón who, notwithstanding partial loss of the Brazilian export market, aimed to

⁴⁹ Argentina's share of the global grain export market also declined sharply after WWII, partly as a result of US and European recovery under the second food regime: whereas before the war, the South American country exported "6.5 million tonnes of maize (64% of world demand), by 1950-1954 it did not sell more than 1 million tonnes" (Rouquié, 1982, cited by Blacha and Magallán, 2013: 9).

undermine the *Justicialista* administration, in alliance with Brazil's conservative *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN) (*Ibid*).

Although gains for labour had been much more prominent in the cities, the rural masses also constituted an important source of political support from the 1930s onwards, when agro-exporting oligarchies were in a position of strategic retreat, given the less favourable external conditions at the time. Political discourse from even conservative politicians conceded on the often unproductive and idle nature of large estates (Balsa, 2012). Nevertheless, whereas the left- and centre-advocated solution was redistributive agrarian reform, the right warmed to a modernisation discourse on green revolution technologies (linked to foreign multinationals) and agro-industrial integration (linked to national industries). This strategy of so-called "conservative modernisation" prevailed after military coups across the region halted the more significant efforts at land redistribution undertaken in South America, particularly in Andean countries' Bolivia, Chile and Peru (1950s-1970s) (Delgado, 2005; Lipton, 2009; Chonchol, 2003). Yet peasants' struggles for agrarian reform proved formative for the rural labour unions and social movements that eventually coalesced at national level into Brazil's CONTAG, Paraguay's ONAC, and Chile's MUCECH - COPROFAM's member organisations with the largest contingents of peasants and agricultural wage labourers.

3.1.2 Wage workers, peasants, and family farmers united in Brazil's CONTAG

In neighbouring Brazil, despite the timid appearance of agricultural worker unions in the 1930s and early 1940s, it was not until the late 1940s and early 1950s that rural wage workers' strikes became more common. The latter were coupled with legal action in the country's labour courts demanding recognition of labour rights⁵⁰ (minimum wage, holidays) based on the 1943 Consolidation of Labour Laws⁵¹ (CLT). Although CLT in theory only applied to urban workers, it was frequently invoked as a benchmark for rural cases (Medeiros, 1989)⁵².

⁵⁰ Some of these were successful, such as recognition in 1951 by the Regional Labour Tribunal of São Paulo of the right to paid holidays to '*colonos* and other agricultural wage earners' (Medeiros, 1989:24).

⁵¹ *Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho*.

⁵² Given the urban bias of Brazil's 1943 labour legislation, attempts were initially made to consider workers in rural processing factories as industrial labourers in order to make the legislation applicable to them (*Ibid*).

Rural workers and small-scale peasants became increasingly influenced by the underground activities of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). Founded in 1922, the PCB self-reorganised after 1943 to become a mass party seeking to expand its bases among both urban and rural workers.⁵³ Regarding the latter, the term 'peasant' (*camponês*) became increasingly used by the PCB to encapsulate a wide range of rural labouring classes, going beyond agricultural wage labourers to also include different types of tenant farmers (*parceiros*, *meeiros*, *arrendatários*), squatters (*posseiros*), and small landowners (*pequenos proprietários*) (Medeiros, 1989).⁵⁴ This broad terminology and political vision was later influential in forming a national agrarian confederation premised upon unity amongst different rural labouring class fractions. Two other factors of unity for what would become CONTAG deserve attention: the overarching goal of agrarian reform as a rallying plank, and the struggle to achieve state recognition of rural unions through a legally-sanctioned rural workers' statute.

As per its third National Conference in 1946, the PCB's strategy of facilitating the creation of rural labour unions involved giving support to peasants' more immediate demands, since achieving real – albeit piecemeal – policy advances served as powerful evidence of how collective action could contribute to the improvement of their everyday living conditions. The PCB organised a first national-scale meeting to elect Brazilian representatives and voice its programmatic priorities ahead of the International Conference of Agricultural Workers, held in October 1953 in Vienna, Austria. Shortly thereafter, the Second National Conference of Agricultural Labourers and Workers in 1954 in São Paulo⁵⁵ saw the creation of Brazil's first national scale organisation of rural workers: ULTAB (*União dos Lavradores e Trabalhadores Agrícolas no Brasil*).

⁵³ Although outlawed in 1947 by the semi-democratic regime of 1946-1964, the PCB went underground and remained active throughout this period, cultivating ties with more militant sectors of Getúlio Vargas' and João Goulart's Brazilian Labour Party (PTB).

⁵⁴ This was part of a conscious effort to build the widest possible class base to implement a 'democratic-bourgeois revolution'. The latter entailed an alliance not just with urban labourers, but also with the 'national industrial bourgeoisie', following the PCB's stagiest theory, which predicated full development of capitalist productive forces as a precondition for socialism (Medeiros, 1989).

⁵⁵ The conference had 303 representatives, including wage labourers (from sugar, coffee, rice, and cacao plantations), tenant farmers, and small or medium producers from 16 different states attending. 21 subsequent encounters of rural workers would occur between 1955 and 1961 (see Figure 7 below), most of them at federated state level (Medeiros, 1989).

The encompassing nature of the conference final document's definition of 'agrarian reform' reflected the PCB's efforts to integrate diverse sectors of the countryside.⁵⁶ Though seen as a crucial first step, against which resistance of the rural oligarchies was strongest, wide-scale land redistribution was not the sole policy mechanism envisaged by the wider-ranging concept of agrarian reform. Indeed, part of ULTAB's rural social base included peasant family farmers (with and without land titles), whose policy priorities focused on support to agricultural production. Moreover, though agricultural labourers and other landless peasants' focus was primarily on securing access to land, the presumed following step involved obtaining support for production⁵⁷. Convergence towards this type of comprehensive understanding of agrarian reform during the 1950s-1960s helped consolidate the social category of the peasant as encompassing not only landless agricultural wage labourers, but also small and medium scale farmers who had informal or formalised access to land (Medeiros, 1989; Teixeira, 2018).

Besides the rural unions organised by the PCB, CONTAG's other main formative branch originated in rural organisations linked to the Catholic Church. A succession of episcopal meetings in the 1950s that raised concerns with social injustice in the Brazilian countryside led to a rise of unionisation sparked by local church-linked organisations. Starting in Rio Grande do Norte (RN) state, through the initiative of rural extension service organisation *Serviço de Assistência Rural* (SAR), in association with church-linked radio stations, agricultural labourers were informed about their rights and encouraged to organise into local unions.⁵⁸ Strengthened by popular education institution *Movimento de Educação de Base* (MEB) (created by government decree in 1961), and supported by Brazil's National Bishops Confederation (CNBB), the experience spread to other states, e.g. *Círculos Operários* (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro) and *Frentes Agrárias* (Rio Grande do Sul).

⁵⁶ "Understood as a measure of social justice, agrarian reform was viewed as the distribution of *latifundiários*' land to the agricultural workers and landless labourers, or smallholders with insufficient land; of obtaining a consolidated property land title for *posseiros*, occupiers, and land *colonos*; of measures to support production (technical assistance, easy and cheap credit, supply of machinery and tools, price guarantees, support to cooperative movement); prohibition of [...] semi-feudal forms of labour exploitation, such as unpaid work [...]; guaranteeing indigenous [peoples] the [rights to] lands they occupied" (Medeiros, 1989:32).

⁵⁷ Interview IR-SA3.

⁵⁸ Interview AO-SA6.



Figure 7: Brazil's President João Goulart at ULTAB's 1st Congress in Belo Horizonte, November 1961. Source: CPDOC/FGV.

CNBB-promoted rural unionism emphasized defending agricultural labourers' rights, and framed agrarian reform as a process that would secure the rural family household and property, straying away from any mention of class struggle. However, youth and student Catholic organisations⁵⁹ defended a more radical approach, influenced by Christian Humanism, and thus competed not only with the PCB in enrolling agricultural workers into unions, but also with conservative Church segments. The Catholic youth's drive for rural unionisation propelled their own more autonomous political organisation in 1962, *Ação Popular*⁶⁰ (Teixeira, 2018; Medeiros, 1989). Stemming from both genuine concern with rural masses' living conditions and a strategy of disputing the rural social base being won over by the PCB, *Ação Popular* emerged as a powerful

⁵⁹ *Juventude Universitária Católica* (JUC), *Juventude Operária Católica* (JOC), and *Juventude Estudantil Católica* (JEC).

⁶⁰ Interview AO-SA6.

social force. It effectively managed to compete with the Communist Party *and* with the Peasant Leagues,⁶¹ a third non-unionised social force channelling rural labourers' struggles.

Executive orders passed in 1962 to regulate rural unionisation – allowing for only one union to officially represent municipality-level agricultural workers – led to a race between existing PCB and Catholic Church rural organisations to become officially recognised first in each locality. Federations uniting dozens of local unions across Brazil's federated states were subsequently created. The process was accelerated by legislative approval of the Rural Worker's Statute⁶² (ETR) (2 March 1963), which included provisions on rural unionisation. The National Confederation for Workers in Agriculture (CONTAG) was eventually created to nationally bring together both PCB- and church-linked unions and federations. Hence CONTAG's foundational congress (20 December 1963) had delegates from "263 recognized rural unions, 480 undergoing official recognition by the Ministry of Labour, and 29 federations from 19 states of Brazil" (Teixeira, 2018:86).

The 1963 Rural Worker Statute both recognized rural workers' economic and social rights and established conditions for their organisation into local rural labour unions. Insomuch as it was strongly inspired by the 1943 labour act, it inherited the Vargas-era corporatist model based on representation monopoly and labour union unity.⁶³ This meant that only one representative entity could speak for the entire sector.⁶⁴ These top-down features of state-monitored labouring class representation were nevertheless a boon in the final months of the semi-democratic regime as they ensured CONTAG had solid national-level scale representation and country-wide capillarity *before* the 1964 onset of a two-decade military regime and its systematic repression, intimidation, and co-optation attempts⁶⁵. CONTAG's foundation on the basis of single national rural labouring class representation would ensure its capacity to remain united throughout the following decades, despite its considerable internal ideological and socio-economic

⁶¹ *Ligas Camponesas*.

⁶² *Estatuto do Trabalhador Rural*.

⁶³ Principles known in Portuguese as *monopólio da representação* and *unicidade sindical*.

⁶⁴ CONTAG would retain this monopoly of rural labour union representation from its creation in 1963 until the 1988 Federal Constitution of the new post-military democratic regime. The latter recognized the plurality of the labour movement in the face of new labour unions that emerged from the late 1970s and contributed to defeat the military regime in its final years (Favareto, 2006; Selwyn, 2012).

⁶⁵ Interview AO-SA6.

heterogeneity. Both the 1963 Rural Worker Statute and CONTAG's name referred to 'workers in agriculture', an expression that, like the term 'peasant' used by PCB in preceding decades, encompassed the wide diversity of rural people who worked the land, whether it formally belonged to them or not.

After the 1964 coup and top-down 'intervention' inside CONTAG by the military regime's appointment of José Rotta, a conservative union leader from São Paulo's *Círculo Operário*, an internal election in 1968 eventually challenged that leadership. The alternative plank formed by representatives of north-eastern states in alliance with Rio Grande do Sul, led by José Francisco (from Pernambuco)⁶⁶ won by one vote, taking back the direction of the national confederation. After taking office in April 1968, the incoming leadership organised a large CONTAG gathering to discuss the organisation's strategy. This proved crucial in later expanding CONTAG's reach throughout Brazil's states, and multiplying the number of affiliated unions.⁶⁷ Yet a key faultline between Brazil's Northeast and South (home to Brazil's largest peasant family farmer constituencies) remained: access to productive land. It divided the mostly landless or land-short agricultural workers/peasants of the Northeast drylands and the mostly poor but landowning family farmers of the Southern temperate zones. As described by CONTAG former Director and Secretary General, Francisco Urbano:

We organised a large encounter [...] to rethink CONTAG [where] we spent the whole week debating. The big internal conflict between farmers of the South who wanted to discuss agricultural policy returned. And we from the North/Northeast called them all *latifundiários*, because we wanted land. That's when they threatened: "either you discuss our interests, or we're going to create the small landowners' union, and the small landowners' confederation" [...]. So we started to show them that founding the small landowners' union [would link them to] the confederation of the self-employed, [which] would have to be affiliated to the employers' confederation. So they would have to go to [large-scale farmers' organisation] CNA.⁶⁸ A big debate emerged. We said: "Ok, you're a small landowner. What's the difference between you and a wage labourer? You have a little house, a little plot of land, and a place to work [...]. You're poor, miserable, without any right. These guys here also have nothing, and the difference is that they don't have that little house. These tenant farmers, same thing". We called this: 'similitude of living conditions'. Because of [...] the proximity between the everyday lives of each of these [types of workers in agriculture], they should be together. As long as programmes, actions are created to defend the small landowners [...]. To convince the *Gaúchos, Catarinenses, Paranaenses*⁶⁹ not to leave.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Francisco would preside the organisation during more than a decade (1968-1979).

⁶⁷ Following the 1943 CLT model, the 1963 ETR determined that the labour movement in the countryside would be constituted of unions at municipal level, organised in federations at state level, under one confederation at national level.

⁶⁸ *Confederação Nacional da Agricultura*.

⁶⁹ Inhabitants of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná - the three Southern states of Brazil.

⁷⁰ Interview AO-SA6.

The 'similitude of living conditions' argument enabled to justify 'differentiated agricultural policy' as one of the pillars of a 'national integration programme' that came out of the 1968 encounter, and was to be disseminated across each of the country's state-level federations, through a union training and capacity-building line of action. Another key pillar included a strategy to defend wage labourers, including by hiring lawyers, upholding clauses from the Rural Workers' Statute, and making collective (as opposed to individual) claims in the country's labour courts:

To generate a political force, if you create a legal case with 50 instead of just 1 against a factory, then you're creating a political platform [...]. Although you do run the risk of one decision putting at risk all 50 [labourers]. But soon enough you have the strength to confront this question.⁷¹

A further line aimed to uphold the 1964 Land Statute⁷², to improve conditions of tenant farmers and "creating [land] conflicts, to be able to request expropriation, when the social function of property, of land, is not being fulfilled".⁷³ CONTAG's national integration and training programme, with one pillar for each key segment, together with a strategy of creating municipal-level unions and state-level federations, enabled CONTAG to consolidate its diverse membership. Indeed, after the 1968 internal election based on Northeast-South unity reasserted the organisation's strength, CONTAG leaders were able to negotiate with government technocratic wings and ensure some social service delivery to rural areas, while maintaining the regained autonomy of its top management. This occurred despite the military regime's severe repression of many local agricultural labour union members.

Increasing tensions in the countryside in many Latin American countries, coupled with the Cuban revolution in 1959 had created a domestic and international environment that was initially favourable to redistributive land reform (1950s-early 1960s). The Cuban revolution and agrarian reform sparked fears within US and Latin American governments that its suddenly visible practical feasibility would lead to a spread of communism in the region. Indeed the US had recently imposed top-down redistributive agrarian reforms in South Korea (1950) and Taiwan (1953) to curtail the spread of communism in Asia after the 1949 Chinese revolution (Moraes, Árabe, and

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Estatuto da Terra.*

⁷³ Interview AO-SA6.

Silva, 2008). Redistributive land reform was thus promoted in Latin America by the Kennedy administration's Alliance for Progress. The Organisation of American States (OAS) meeting, in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL) and FAO in 1961 led to the adoption of the Punta del Este Charter, in which member countries agreed to support

integral agrarian reform programmes, to transform, where necessary, the unjust structure of land ownership and use, in order to substitute the regime of *latifundios* and *minifundios* by a fair property system, so that, complemented by adequate credit, technical assistance, commercialisation and distribution of their products, land would become, for those who work it, the basis of their economic stability, foundation of their welfare, and guarantee of their liberty and dignity (Guimarães, 1963: 228).

This reformist discourse held sway among "urban-based liberal political forces (populists and Christian Democrats)" in the region (de Janvry, 1981:146). Alliance for Progress funding initially helped implement several agrarian reforms in the region (Lipton, 2009). It was supported by the structuralist theses of CEPAL economists, chiefly among them Celso Furtado, who served as Minister of Planning under Brazil's progressive government of João Goulart (1961-1964). Furtado saw "the inexistence of a modern agriculture, of a capitalist base, linked to the internal market" (Furtado, 2002:31 [1957]) as a key reason for frequent food supply and inflation crises (Delgado, 2005) and justification for the breaking up of outdated land tenure systems and labour relations. Another intellectual who served in Goulart's ministerial cabinet, Darcy Ribeiro, summed up that government's vision for agrarian reform, after citing the US Homestead Act of 1862 as a reference:

We wanted to [...] create 10 million small [land]owners, for property to be better defended. It was a capitalist proposal. They said it was communism. Instead of 10 million of small landowners with 50, 100 hectares each, they created a thousand super-landowners with 500.000 hectares, with 1 million hectares [each]. (Ribeiro, 1988: 38:33-38:48)

The modernisers of Brazil and Argentina during the 1930s-1960s indeed were not communists, but aimed for a national development path that would be sufficiently autonomous from both the US and the Soviet Union, something deemed unacceptable for US foreign policy at the height of the Cold War. The subsequent government of General Castelo Branco (1964-1967) had an explicitly US-aligned foreign policy (while successors resumed the more nationalist *realpolitik* of balancing power between different partners) (Moniz Bandeira, 1995), yet it also

approved the Land Statute (*Estatuto da Terra*) in November 1964 (Mendonça, 2010) to contain social pressures by apparently yielding to some rural labouring classes' demands⁷⁴.

Meanwhile in Paraguay, the authoritarian regime of Alfredo Stroessner (1954-1989) initiated an approximation strategy with Brazil to reduce its dependency on Argentina (Moraes and Vieira, 2015:367). This occurred in parallel to its cooptation of part of the Paraguayan peasantry (Ezquerro-Cañete, 2018) by founding small farmer colonies near the Brazilian border, generating internal migration patterns from rural areas near Asunción towards the eastern border of the country (Setrini, 2011). This would in the future prove explosive (see chapter 5), as the Stroessner regime simultaneously created incentives for Brazilians to buy land (e.g. by removing legal constraints for land acquisition by foreigners), migrate, and settle in the very same eastern border region settled by Paraguayan beneficiaries of colonisation schemes (Moraes and Vieira, 2015; Galeano, 2004). It was reinforced by a geographical 'outsourcing' of Brazil's agrarian question by the Brazilian military regime, which, in addition to colonisation projects in Brazil's Amazon or other underpopulated internal 'agricultural frontier' regions, actively encouraged small-scale farmers to migrate and found colonies in Bolivia and Paraguay, with those countries' governments blessings (Zirker, 1994).

3.1.3 Agrarian Leagues and agrarian reform: the origins of ONAC and MUCECH

Brazil's Peasant Leagues – which had been a driving force of rural organisations from the mid-1950s (particularly in the Northeast, with strongholds in Paraíba and Pernambuco states) – started showing signs of decline by the early 1960s, partly as a result of increased competition for recruitment from the PCB's ULTAB and Catholic youths' *Ação Popular* into formal unions, which deviated from the Leagues' more diffuse and less hierarchical social movement strategy. This left the Peasant Leagues and other social movements (such as *Master* in Rio Grande do Sul) outside CONTAG's founding membership. Furthermore, the Leagues were internally divided between those who saw Cuban-inspired peasant revolutionary struggle as the only viable way to

⁷⁴ Among its surprisingly progressive features, the statute recognized the social function of land property and legalised *a posteriori* compensation of expropriation through debt titles rather than through *a priori* payments in money (Guimarães, Medeiros, 1997). See chapter 5 for further discussion on these issues.

overcome the *latifundio* (led by Clodomir Moraes), and those who favoured non-violent forms of direct action backed by the law to achieve agrarian reform (led by Francisco Julião) (Medeiros, 1989). These internal contradictions coupled with increased repression of autonomous rural movements after 1964 meant that the Leagues had all but disappeared or gone underground by the second half of that decade.

Agrarian leagues with similar features as those of Brazil in the 1950s nevertheless resurfaced elsewhere in the Southern Cone in the 1960s and 1970s, most significantly in the Paraguayan central Departments of its Oriental region (Misiones, Paraguairí, Cordillera, San Pedro, Concepción, Caaguazú, Guairá), as well as in Argentine northern and eastern Provinces (Chaco, Formosa, Misiones, Corrientes, north of Santa Fé)⁷⁵. Most contemporary Paraguayan peasant family farmer organisations claim their origins in the rich experience of the Christian Agrarian Leagues (*Ligas Agrarias Cristianas*), particularly COPROFAM member ONAC, but also national counterparts (and LVC members) MCNOC (*Mesa Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas*) and FNC (*Federación Nacional Campesina*) (Parra and Soares, 2003).

Paraguay's Agrarian Leagues sprung from a combination of social forces, particularly in the southern Department of Misiones. There, the Stroessner regime took advantage of increased resources awarded by the US Alliance for Progress after 1961 to initiate its Wheat Plan (*Plan del Trigo*). This was to be the ground for green revolution technologies' introduction in Paraguay to grow wheat and soya, and intensify pre-existing cotton production (Palau, 2015). Resulting increased demand for land put pressure on peasant family farmers' individual plots as well as on the *campos comunales*. These were collectively used grazing areas for cattle belonging to hundreds of adjacent peasant families, as a way of making the most out of increasingly scarce land (Telesca, 2014).

When outsiders escorted by policemen enclosed a common grazing area in San Juan Ruguá, Misiones, over 400 peasant families self-organised and obtained an order from a higher military authority (a veteran from the 1930s Paraguayan-Bolivian Chaco War with whom many of the peasants had done their military service) to cancel the fencing of the field (Telesca, 2014). The peasants' successful defence of their land through collective mobilisation - fused with an

⁷⁵ Interviews AO-SA8 and CS-SA7.

increased presence of progressive missionaries and youth organisations connected to urban labour unions - laid the groundwork for the growth of Paraguay's Christian Agrarian Leagues.

European-based Jesuits' 'return' to Paraguay in the 1920s-1930s (160 years after their expulsion by Spanish and Portuguese forces) to some of the towns that their forbearers had helped found in Misiones (Santa María, San Ignacio, Santa Rosa), would later spur an increase of Paraguayan Jesuits in the region from the 1950s.⁷⁶ Their knowledge of the Guaraní language intensified their links with peasantries of southern Paraguay, leading to local articulation of groups reinforced by the youth organisations' activism. The Catholic Workers' Youth organisation (JOC) – created in 1940 – helped found the initial centre of the Christian Agrarian Leagues in Santa Rosa, and its first federation uniting several districts in the Department of Misiones in 1962. These rapidly spread to other Departments of Paraguay's Oriental region (Telesca, 2014).

The growth of social Catholic organisations in urban and rural Latin America was influenced by the socially progressive encyclicals of Pope John XXIII (1958-1963)⁷⁷ and Church reformism of the Vatican II Council (1962-1965), as well as the international Catholic labour movement – including the creation in 1954 of the International Movement of Agrarian and Rural Catholic Youth (MIJARC) in Belgium. It played a key role in fostering progressive thought and mobilising resistance at the height of South America's authoritarian regimes (1960s-1970s), including Stroessner's in Paraguay. 1960 saw the creation of the Christian Democrat Social Movement (future Christian Democrat Party - PDC in 1965) (Telesca, 2014), and inauguration of the Catholic University of Asunción (UCA) (Birch, 2011), followed in 1963 by the foundation of urban labour union *Central Cristiana de Trabajadores* (CCT) and its rural counterpart, *Federación Cristiana Campesina* (FCC) (Caravías, 2015).

⁷⁶ Persistent, if vague, collective memory of Jesuit 'missions' and their self-contained evangelized indigenous communities (along the present-day territory straddling Paraguay's Misiones and Itapúa departments, Argentina's Misiones province, and Northwestern RS state in Brazil) is until today part of agrarian organisations' symbolic discursive repertoire in the region, particularly *Guaraní* leader Sépé Tiaraju's battle cry 'This land has owners!' (*Essa terra tem dono!*) when leading resistance against the Portuguese and Spanish expulsion of the missions from the 1750s (Interviews AO-SA4 and CS-SA26).

⁷⁷ For instance, *Mater et magistra* (1961), aimed to update some of the principles set out in another previous key social Catholic text, *Rerum Novarum* (or "Rights and Duties of Capital and Labour") published by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. *Mater et magistra* was addressed to "all workers of the world", emphasizing the rights of workers to organize in labour unions and the right to private property for members of all classes (Caravías, 2015).

The nascent Christian labour union movement was thus critical in expanding the initial grassroots experience of the agrarian leagues, although part of the leagues preferred to remain autonomous from the Christian Democrat party structure, urban labour movement, and Church, and founded FENALAC (*Federación Nacional de Ligas Agrarias Cristianas*) in 1965 (Telesca, 2014; Caravías, 2015) with a less hierarchical and formalised structure. Members of FENALAC purchased 3.000 ha of land in San Pedro Department and founded the community of San Isidro de Jejuí, which became a model for self-sustained collective farming and a centre of popular education for peasants (1969-1975). FENALAC's approach also influenced that of the organisation borne out of its merging with FCC in 1971, the *Coordinación Nacional de Bases Campesinas Cristianas*, known as KOGA (meaning 'planted' in Guaraní) (Caravías, 2015), which avoided permanent leadership structures, and rotated coordination functions amongst its members.

The strong emphasis on popular education partly drew from the growth of Liberation Theology across the region. But the Leagues also made a concomitant reaffirmation of common agricultural work practices that harked back to ancient indigenous traditions, such as the *minga*, whereby several peasants would join forces to successively work on each of their neighbours' respective plots, thereby reducing drudgery and strengthening social ties (Caravías, 2015). Repression against the Christian Agrarian Leagues grew during the 1970s, becoming particularly violent and widespread between 1974 and 1976, when the leagues' members went underground (Ezquerro-Cañete, 2018). Survivors of the leagues would emerge again from the 1980s onwards, some of them becoming ONAC's co-founders⁷⁸.

The 1980s also saw the reactivation of Chilean agrarian organisations whose heyday had been in the 1960s, at the height of agrarian reform mobilisation in Latin America. MUCECH's formation was encouraged by Chile's cardinal Silva Henríquez. Henríquez had been one of the Catholic Church's key advocates for Chile's agrarian reform and had contributed by distributing and parcelling some of the Church's lands, before Christian Democrat president Eduardo Frei Montalva (1967-1970) initiated the national land redistribution process in earnest, kickstarted by the Agrarian Reform and Peasant Unionisation laws in 1967, and continued under Salvador Allende's (1970-1973) Popular Unity (UP) government (see Figure 8 below).

⁷⁸ Interview AO-SA8.



Figure 8: *Chile's Cardinal Silva Henríquez (left) and president Salvador Allende (centre).*
Source: www.memoriachilena.cl

Despite the political strength of its conservative sectors supporting Chile's military dictatorship, the Catholic Church's progressive wing had a crucial role of mediation and alliance building in the 1980s-1990s between remnant segments of organisations created shortly prior to the 1967-1973 agrarian reform. Indeed, the agrarian reform process had a crucial role in the formation of agrarian organisations in Chile, given that its beneficiaries were also trained with rural extension and popular education tools to strengthen their unions and social movements, in order to consolidate land redistribution gains in the long term.⁷⁹ Despite the agrarian 'counter-reform' of the Pinochet regime (1973-1989), previous gains were not entirely obliterated, and agrarian organisations were resuscitated from underground activity during Chile's democratic transition in the 1980s:

MUCECH was born in 1987 [...]. This was all sheltered by the Catholic Church, which supported [MUCECH] a lot. At that time, cardinal Silva Henríquez – this was the peasant's cardinal, he called us and told us: 'it is no good when the rats are scattered, [as] the cat takes advantage', in reference to the dictator [Pinochet]. Consequently, he said, 'unite'. And this kickstarted a political reflection process, because there were organisations from the Christian-Democratic world, the Socialist world, the Communist world. And

⁷⁹ Interview AO-SA2.

previously they had been divided by ideological problems. But here was a common space. MUCECH takes shape in 1986 as a political alliance, which united small producers, agricultural workers, and the *etnias*. [The latter] were unrecognized, today [they are] referred to as *pueblos originarios* [i.e. indigenous peoples]. The Mapuche, the Aymara, at that time in Chile [were] not even [considered] part of society.⁸⁰

The Agrarian Leagues (*Ligas Agrarias*) of Argentina's northern and eastern Provinces in the late 1960s and early 1970s, for their part, sprung essentially from workers of rural processing factories (cotton, tobacco, sugarcane) in semiarid or tropical regions, outside the temperate zones of the *Pampa Húmeda*. Their ideological references and political formation were also linked to Catholic youth movements, at times going against the orientation of the Church, but nonetheless perceived by the latter as potential alternatives or ramparts to the spread of communist-linked groups in the countryside. The Argentine leagues suffered from violent state repression, before and increasingly after the 1976 military coup (Waisberg, 2014) that precipitated Argentina into its last authoritarian regime (1976-1983).

3.2 Political democracy and economic neoliberalism in the Southern Cone: the roots of COPROFAM's formation

From the late 1960s, the two-decade process initiated by Perón's land price freeze, through which a significant part of FAA's tenant farmer base had secured their access to land, had begun to be reversed (Tifni, 2018; Pérez, 2015). Argentina's Agricultural and Livestock Census of 1988 revealed a significant reduction in the country's total number of farms (compared to the previous 1969 census), the great majority of which (93%) were under 200 ha in size, a loss of more than 75.000 farms. In the Pampa region alone, the census revealed a disappearance of "almost half of the units under 100 ha, reduced to some 85.000 farms. Simultaneously, the average size of all [farms rose] from 278 to 379 ha" during the 1970s-1980s period (Pérez, 2015:4-5). In sum, "FAA's social base became increasingly heterogeneous", posing considerable challenges to "unitarian political representation" (Pérez, 2015:21).

The transformation of tens of thousands of FAA tenant farmers into small and medium landholders during the 1940s-1960s meant that in following decades, "FAA would be able to

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

establish alliances with organisations with which it had historically maintained a relation of confrontation" (Pérez, 2015:20), that is the large-scale *latifundio* and agribusiness organisations, SRA and CRA. At the other extreme, the permanence of a politicised smaller-scale farmer base, particularly in FAA's historical stronghold in southern Santa Fé, meant that a significant part of its membership allied itself with urban labour unions, such as CTA (*Central de Trabajadores Argentinos*) or MTA (*Movimiento de Trabajadores Argentinos*) (*Ibid.*). Moreover, the political force of more capitalized Pampa middle farmers within FAA blurred a more contrasting picture at the national territorial scale. Hence "a *federado* who produces soya [in or near the Pampa] is one thing, a [much less capitalised] *federado agrario* from Neuquén [in north-western Patagonia] is another".⁸¹

The infamous 'lost decade' for Latin American growth set off by the debt crisis in the early 1980s, which by some measures amounts more to a 'lost quarter century' in both poverty rates (Ocampo, 2014) and stagnation of the agricultural sector⁸² was particularly harsh on the impoverished masses of the South American countryside. But it also badly affected more consolidated medium producers, whose hopes of becoming well-to-do larger-scale farmers under the previous economic boom were now drastically dashed.⁸³ Hence, in Argentina,

The period initiated with the military dictatorship in 1976 concluding with the final crisis in 2001 [marks] a quarter century of Argentine decadence from several points of view, basically of deindustrialisation. But it is also in the last years of the 20th century a period of falling international prices, of gradual appreciation of the exchange rate, which generate profound agrarian crises. If one spoke to an Argentine in the 1990s, it seemed that 'the countryside' - let alone family farming - [but even] large agriculture, the [whole] countryside did not seem to exist, did not seem to have an important role in the Argentine economy.⁸⁴

Domestic contexts of declining industrial sectors in both Brazil and Argentina, whereby agricultural exports were increasingly used to guarantee fiscal results and reduce debt burdens (Delgado, 2005) under galloping hyperinflation crises that would only be stabilised in the 1990s (Ocampo, 2014) intertwined with increased trade liberalisation at global and regional levels. This combination of factors consolidated the Southern Cone's agricultural policy corollary of the neoliberal paradigm: public support to competitive larger-scale export-oriented agricultural

⁸¹ Interview CS-SA13.

⁸² Interview CS-SA8.

⁸³ Interview CS-SA26.

⁸⁴ Interview CS-SA8.

sectors, and minimal social protection for those not deemed competitive enough under new liberalized trade rules.⁸⁵ Under this logic, reflecting larger-scale farmer organisations' discourse that there was 'only one agriculture', and that those who could not compete under existing rules were to receive only social compensatory measures, there was little space for agricultural policies tailored to medium or smaller-scale agriculture.

Neoliberal hegemony within both Northern development agencies and Southern country governments by the 1980s and 1990s accentuated in economic policy terms the conceptual division between small-scale peasant and middle family farmer in South America. Hence, "IICA, FAO, and governments of the region at the time envisioned a countryside where "those that go up [the social ladder] ascend, and those that do not must be catered to with social policies".⁸⁶ COPROFAM and those within government administrations and academia that backed their claims defended a much wider array of support policies for their represented base. As recalled by a Uruguayan former Minister of Agriculture (1990-1993) in tune with COPROFAM's policy agenda, "we had very strong arguments with people from IICA, people from FAO, who did not see any convincing reason for *políticas diferenciadas*", i.e. specific policies.⁸⁷ Differently from the *compensatory* social policy paradigm, *políticas diferenciadas* was part and parcel of COPROFAM country member organisations' discourse across the region. These were to be sufficiently vigorous economic policies targeted at smaller-scale segments of South American agriculture to potentiate their economic production, processing and distribution capacities, while maintaining the peculiarity of the family farm as self-managed rural labouring economic unit (see chapter 6).

3.2.1 Creation of a regional family farmer platform in the Southern Cone

From the late 1980s, as negotiations for the creation of MERCOSUR were under way, large-scale farmer organisations of the four founding countries⁸⁸ held regular meetings with

⁸⁵ Interview IR-SA1.

⁸⁶ Interview IR-SA1.

⁸⁷ Interview IR-SA1.

⁸⁸ These would go on to form the *Federación de Asociaciones Rurales del Mercosur* (FARM) in the mid-1990s. FARM members were the only rural organisations represented in MERCOSUR's Consultative Council in the 1990s, based on their membership of national business chambers (Riella, 2002).

Ministers of Agriculture of the region through CONASUR (Consultative Council for Agricultural Cooperation of the Southern Area Countries). Though FAA and CNFR took part in CONASUR in the early 1990s, the lack of attention given to small- and medium-scale farmers' demands eventually led them to focus on creating a separate regional organisation that would represent their specific interests (Riella, 2002).

The Catholic Church-linked rural youth organisations that had helped found agrarian leagues in Paraguay and Argentina during the 1960s and 1970s also existed within Uruguay's family farmer organisations and cooperative movement.⁸⁹ Silvio Marzaroli, who presided Uruguay's CNFR (1980s-1990s) and would become COPROFAM's first president, had built previous international networks (in Latin America, Europe, and Africa) as a member of global agrarian Catholic youth organisation MIJARC, including as its Vice-President (1967-1970).⁹⁰ CNFR's Marzaroli established contacts with CONTAG in Brazil, particularly through the latter's federation in neighbouring Rio Grande do Sul state (FETAG-RS), which at the time was presided by Alberto Broch.⁹¹

Given the southernmost state's porous borders with both Uruguay and Argentina, FETAG-RS members were deeply concerned about the impending perils of lifting trade barriers with the two Southern Cone neighbours⁹² after the signature of the Treaty of Asunción in 1991.⁹³ They eventually discovered that their counterparts across the border were equally worried about the impending unrestricted entry of southern Brazilian agricultural products into their own borders. Broch accumulated knowledge on MERCOSUR related-issues through training given to FETAG-RS members at the time, which would later prove crucial in organizing with other COPROFAM members after he became Vice-President⁹⁴ of CONTAG in 1995.

⁸⁹ The *Centro Cooperativista Uruguayo*, for instance, was founded in 1961, and influenced by the Economy and Humanism principles of French priest and activist Louis-Joseph Lebret (see chapter 4). Interview IR-SA1.

⁹⁰ Interview AO-SA4.

⁹¹ Broch eventually became CONTAG's Vice-President, and subsequently President, as well as COPROFAM General Secretary and President (as COPROFAM's top leadership role was subsequently named) on two separate occasions.

⁹² As recalled by CONTAG's Luiz Vicente Facco: "There were many discussions between 1991 and 1994 on the Treaty of Asunción, preoccupation with milk, wheat, grapes, wine, peaches, pork, meat [...]. There was a fear that Argentina and Uruguay were coming for us with free trade and would wipe out family farming". Interview AO-SA5.

⁹³ Signed by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, initiating the MERCOSUR regional integration process.

⁹⁴ Given Broch's first-hand experience and knowledge of international issues affecting family farming, CONTAG's Vice-President post was eventually merged with that of International Advisor. Interview AO-SA4.

MERCOSUR negotiations on trade tariffs and harmonisation of legislation were divided into sectorial working groups. Governments of the region allowed national-level family farmer organisations to take part in the meetings of Subgroup 8 on Agriculture,⁹⁵ though their capacity to influence negotiations in that space was highly constrained. Faced with this impasse, Marzaroli organized several meetings of family farmer organisations from the founding countries of the regional bloc between 1993 and 1994, with support from the *Red Interamericana de Agricultura y Democracia* (RIAD).⁹⁶ Thus in Porto Alegre,⁹⁷ 14 organisations of the region, including CONTAG and CUT, CNFR, FAA and Paraguay's FNC⁹⁸ met to create COPROFAM in August 1994.

Different terms had been used by COPROFAM's national organisations to designate their members in the years leading up to the regional agrarian organisation's formation. Yet two terms predominated: COPROFAM members either referred to themselves as peasants (*campesino/camponês*) or small and medium producers. At the time of its creation, CONTAG's base in Brazil's Northeast and Paraguay's Federación Nacional Campesina (FNC) referred to themselves as peasants. On the other hand, Uruguay's CNFR and Argentina's FAA members, as well as CONTAG's base in Brazil's South referred to themselves as small and medium producers.⁹⁹

After an internal restructuring phase between 1997 and 2000, COPROFAM elected a new Secretary General, CONTAG's Alberto Broch, who took over from the regional network's Uruguayan founder and first Secretary General, CNFR's Silvio Marzaroli. This transition coincided with COPROFAM's decision to expand beyond MERCOSUR's four founding member countries, incorporating Chile's MUCECH, Bolivia's CIOEC, and Peru's CCP.¹⁰⁰ Organisations from Chile, Peru,

⁹⁵ Given its concomitant representation of agricultural wage labourers, CONTAG also took part in Subgroup 11 on Labour Relations, along with members of a previously existing regional network of labour unions, the *Coordinadora de Centrales Sindicales del Cono Sur* – CCSCS (Interview CS-SA1). CCSCS included Brazil's *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* – CUT, represented by its Director of Union Policy in the early 1990s, Miguel Rossetto, who would later become RS Vice-Governor (1998-2002) and MDA minister (2003-2006, 2014). CUT had created its own Rural Department in 1986, and would eventually merge with CONTAG in 1995 (until 2009) (see chapter 6).

⁹⁶ Interamerican Network of Agriculture and Democracy. A key funder of RIAD was the Swiss-based Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Man, with whom Silvio Marzaroli had previously developed close contacts. Interview AO-SA4.

⁹⁷ The meeting was organized by CONTAG's Rio Grande do Sul state federation, FETAG-RS.

⁹⁸ FNC eventually left COPROFAM and joined CLOC/LVC several years later. Interviews AO-SA4 and AO-SA5.

⁹⁹ Interviews AO-SA4, and AO-SA1.

¹⁰⁰ Interview AO-SA4. At the peak of its membership, COPROFAM was composed of 12 member organisations from 7 South American countries (the 4 MERCOSUR founding countries plus Chile, Bolivia, and Peru), congregating 125 organisations (confederations, federations) at a second level, and close to 5.000 organisations at a third level

and Bolivia that joined COPROFAM in the early 2000s referred to themselves first and foremost as *campesinos*, as reflected in those organisations' names (Berdegú, 2014). Reflecting the social base of its expanded membership, COPROFAM's documents from its next assembly in 2003 onwards no longer referred solely to *agricultura familiar* (family farming) but to *agricultura familiar campesina e indígena* (peasant and indigenous family farming),¹⁰¹ an amalgamate term that better contemplated the wide-ranging diversity of rural working people in the Southern Cone and Andean countryside. This terminology was a self-representative discursive frame effort to summarize the huge diversity of South America's rural labouring classes into three major categories and identities (indigenous peoples, peasants, small and medium producers), although it was often shortened to '(peasant) family farming' in national contexts.

During the late 1990s COPROFAM managed to have Subgroup 8 hold discussions on the impact of regional integration on peasant family farmers of the countries and several seminars with government and agrarian organisation representatives on would-be specific policies for family farmers in the region, within MERCOSUR agreements. However, attempts to further influence MERCOSUR policy negotiating spaces initially had little effect (Riella, 2002). The breakthrough came when a COPROFAM seminar organised with IFAD support at the margins of a MERCOSUR summit in the Uruguayan capital yielded a written list of demands that would become known as *Carta de Montevideo*,¹⁰² signed on 15 December 2003. The letter expressed that the region's "rural family farms need special treatment", and consequently "internal public policies and instruments [...] in each country [...] need to be harmonised". It also stated that "family, and peasant and indigenous farming"¹⁰³ represents the social and economic base of small and medium communities" of the countries' regions. COPROFAM requested a space in which it would directly meet with government representatives in order to "propose an agenda for family

(unions, associations) adding up to a total of 35 million rural workers, family farmers, peasants, and indigenous peoples (Interview AO-SA5).

¹⁰¹ Often referred to by its Spanish/Portuguese acronym AFCL.

¹⁰² Letter of Montevideo.

¹⁰³ The expression "Peasant and Indigenous Family Farming" would resurface a decade later in the run up to the campaign for the International Year of Family Farming, as it would be adopted by the Latin American coordination of agrarian movements *Alianza por la Soberanía Alimentaria* (regional arm of the global International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty - IPC) as a way to clearly delimitate the family farming sector and distinguish it from North American and European counterparts using an ambiguous definition of the term that could potentially include larger-scale farmers.

farming policies to the [MERCOSUR high-level] CMC [Common Market Council]" (COPROFAM, 2003: 2-3).

A COPROFAM delegation then headed to MERCOSUR headquarters in Montevideo and pressured Brazilian diplomats to have then-foreign minister Celso Amorim receive them. Amorim agreed to let COPROFAM president Alberto Broch address MERCOSUR's Common Market Group (GMC¹⁰⁴) meeting of MERCOSUR Ministers of Foreign Relations, the first time a South American peasant family farmer leader was given the floor at that level of regional negotiations. COPROFAM's request for an institutionalised policy dialogue in the *Carta de Montevideo* aimed to take advantage of a rapidly changing political landscape.¹⁰⁵ The elections of presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Nestor Kirchner a few months apart from each other opened prospects for greater participatory space, including at the regional level.¹⁰⁶ Yet COPROFAM's initial formal request seemed very timid in retrospect,¹⁰⁷ given the dimension that the soon-to-be-created Specialised Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) would later take, as a permanent regional forum for agrarian organisation participation.

3.2.2 The opening up of regional participation to agrarian organisations: REAF/MERCOSUR

After COPROFAM's speech and handing of the *Carta de Montevideo* to the region's foreign ministers, Brazil's Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) was prompted by CONTAG to make good on the promise of opening MERCOSUR's policy dialogue mechanisms to regional agrarian organisation participation. MDA opted to find existing underexplored institutional spaces outside the spotlight of MERCOSUR's trade negotiation subgroups. Undoubtedly, if a new subgroup on

¹⁰⁴ The GMC is MERCOSUR's executive decisional body and is composed of member countries' representatives from ministries of foreign relations, economy, and central banks.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews CS-SA1, AO-SA4, and AO-SA5.

¹⁰⁶ Presidents Kirchner and Lula signed the *Consenso de Buenos Aires* at their first bilateral summit on 16 October 2003. The declaration included a reorientation of the terms upon which South American regional integration was to occur, namely not merely as the reduction of trade tariffs but as a wider reaffirmation of regional sovereignty and of a social dimension of regional integration.

¹⁰⁷ It demanded the creation of a temporary ad hoc group within Subgroup 8 that would discuss some of the more pressing implications of trade agreements and regional production and distribution chain integration.

family farming was proposed, Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture¹⁰⁸ would most likely block it on the grounds that there already existed a subgroup on agriculture, and that the three other countries did not have specific counterpart institutions for family farming policies. Only two MERCOSUR 'specialised meetings' existed at the time (forestry and cooperatives) and were marginal to the regional bloc's decisional structure. Yet they were sufficiently institutionalised to meet regularly and possess the legal attribution to propose resolutions, recommendations and decisions for endorsement by MERCOSUR's GMC.

MDA's international department, in collaboration with key diplomats working on trade policy or food security in the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) ensured that the resolution proposing REAF's creation did not solely focus on "facilitat[ing] the trade of family farming products" (MERCOSUR, 2004:1) in line with MERCOSUR's trade-centred regional integration mandate. Most importantly for MDA, it made sure REAF was a dialogue space with a mandate to "strengthen public policies" for family farming (art. 1), including with the inputs of "legally recognized regional associations" (art. 2) (MERCOSUR, 2004:*Ibid*).¹⁰⁹

REAF's first three meetings (2004-2005) nevertheless represented a further stage of negotiation to open the newly created regional space to COPROFAM and other organisations' participation. Most government participants had little to no experience of discussing on a par with labour unions or social movement representatives in formal government meetings, let alone at an international level amongst other country delegations. The first REAF in Foz do Iguaçu (September 2004) happened only with government representatives. The following regional meeting in Brasilia (November 2004) was particularly tumultuous, as it involved negotiation of the regiment and functioning of the newly created MERCOSUR specialised meeting. While Brazil insisted that the regional policy dialogue space should be equally represented by civil servants and agrarian organisation leaders - with added pressure from CONTAG members present in the Brazilian delegation - Argentina was still requesting internal consultations and refusing to concede on institutionalising agrarian organisations' permanent and systematic participation¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁸ Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) focused solely on supporting the large-scale export-driven agribusiness sector.

¹⁰⁹ Interviews CS-SA21 and CS-SA1.

¹¹⁰ Interview CS-SA21.

The third meeting in Asunción, Paraguay (May 2005) was the first to have COPROFAM members of MERCOSUR's four founding countries present, but the form in which they would participate also required arduous negotiation. The Paraguayan hosts installed four tables for the government representatives, and seating at a reasonable distance for civil society representatives to merely observe the process without actively participating, at which point the Brazilian delegation protested and threatened to walk out of the meeting with the civil society delegation. Both the Paraguayan Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Brazilian International Advisor escalated their positions phoning their respective ministers to back up their positions. Deadlock was broken with a constructive attitude from (former Uruguayan minister and IFAD representative) Álvaro Ramos, who alongside members of the Brazilian and Uruguayan delegations clarified and reassured that participation would occur in an orderly fashion with each government representative coordinating their delegation's position, notwithstanding the possibility for civil society members to take the floor on behalf of their country's delegation. This also had to be elucidated with COPROFAM members, who initially entered the room and sat together in a corner, and only after clarification went to sit with their respective country delegations.¹¹¹

Despite this victory for regional participation, many government delegates were still unsettled by the prospect of regional meetings in which at any minute things could potentially get out of hand, given that agrarian organisation representatives were now in principle allowed to take the floor on behalf of their national delegation. This naturally brought to the fore the need to create what became REAF's National Sections: national-level meetings between government and civil society representatives to prepare their delegations' position before meeting regionally. This came to be regarded by COPROFAM's member AOs as a significant opportunity for national-level participation, particularly in countries where there was very little access to dialogue with government officials.¹¹² For instance, Paraguay's REAF National Section

¹¹¹ Interview CS-SA21.

¹¹² Interview CS-SA21.

became the country's main policy dialogue space between government and AOs, including to discuss national-level issues that did not necessarily make it to the regional agenda.¹¹³

Additional mid-semester regional meetings with a smaller number of national coordinators and AO representatives were also created to give coherence to the process and reassure previously recalcitrant civil servants. The IFAD MERCOSUR programme, hosted in MERCOSUR headquarters in Montevideo, was crucial given that its director knew the region's key agricultural ministry actors, but also because IFAD provided much of the funding for COPROFAM and other AOs' participation at regional meetings. A REAF Technical Secretariat (ST/REAF) later grew out of governments' desire to obtain greater autonomy from international organisation funding, as was the approval of a regional Fund for Family Farming (FAF). Thematic working groups on Rural Women, Rural Youth, Land Reform, Trade Facilitation, and Rural Insurance (later Climate Change) channelled policy discussions. Cooperation activities involving MERCOSUR's four founding countries (later also including associated members), also enabled mixed government/civil society delegations visiting experiences throughout the region, to learn from the Southern Cone's different national agrarian policy experiences.

The 2004-2014 period was the most fertile for REAF. Between 2006 and 2010 many agendas were taken to the national sections and regional meetings, Brazil's neighbouring countries set up previously inexistent national institutions and policies specifically directed at supporting family farmers, whilst Brazil expanded on its own pre-existent programmes and policy instruments. Regional agrarian participation created space for national-level policy formulation through REAF National Sections and related participatory spaces (*Mesas de Desarrollo Rural*¹¹⁴ in Uruguay, *Foro Nacional de la Agricultura Familiar*¹¹⁵ in Argentina, *Consejo Nacional de Agricultura Familiar*¹¹⁶ in Paraguay), as well as new institutional structures in countries' Ministries of Agriculture. But policy creation and expansion were also restricted by conjunctural oscillations, internal bureaucratic inertias, political resistance, and budgetary limitations. Still, COPROFAM and other AOs' participation in REAF set off a virtuous regional participatory process that left its

¹¹³ Interview CS-SA20.

¹¹⁴ Rural Development Committees.

¹¹⁵ National Family Farming Forum.

¹¹⁶ National Family Farming Council.

marks at all decisional scales, and durably inserted peasant family farming into the Southern Cone, South American, and wider Latin American agricultural policy debates and political agenda.

Conclusion

The formation of COPROFAM's member AOs in Southern Cone countries began in the early 20th century in the trans-border temperate Pampa region. Small and medium-producer colonies on the fringes of *latifundios* were part of modernising government administrations' support base, in alliance with growing urban working and middle classes, through policy mechanisms such as progressive taxation of land (in Uruguay and RS-Brazil). After recognition of rural wage labour rights in Argentina (1943), Peron's administration aimed to create a wider labouring class alliance by capturing and redistributing agrarian rent through combined wage rises for agricultural workers *and* producer price support for FAA's small and medium farmer base. This was facilitated by participatory councils in which FAA actively partook.

A second formative phase included small-scale peasants and wage labourers from Brazil's semi-arid Northeast, whose struggles for agrarian reform were coupled with PCB and Catholic Church social organisation efforts. Their association with Brazil's southern small/medium producer base as 'workers in agriculture' (1963) was further cemented by CONTAG's (1968) 'similitude of living conditions' discursive frame, which combined land, labouring rights, and agricultural policy planks. Struggles for agrarian reform in 1960s-70s Paraguay and Chile laid the foundations for what would become ONAC's and MUCHECH's own worker/peasant/indigenous bases under 1980s democratisation processes.

Under MERCOSUR regional integration in the 1990s, the above AOs joined forces as COPROFAM. In partnership with progressive Southern Cone government officials, they eventually managed to permanently open up regional policy deliberations to AO participation, with the creation of REAF/MERCOSUR in the early 2000s. Three of REAF's emblematic policy processes are discussed in further detail in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 4: Agrarian Organisations in West Africa

Introduction

Differently from South America's sharp dualist contrast between very large-scale and small to medium farms, West Africa's agrarian landscape is mostly "based on family farms of very small size – inferior to 10 ha" (Blein et al., 2008:9). It has the most family farms in Africa, with estimates ranging between 500.000 to 1.5 million in medium-sized countries such as Senegal, Burkina Faso or Côte d'Ivoire, and up to 10 million in Nigeria (Moyo, 2016).

The West African agrarian organisations that comprise ROPPA are composed of diverse rural labouring class fractions. Located primarily in the northern dry Sahel, a first category usually self-identifies as *peasants* and includes semi-proletarianised, pluriactive peasantries, migrating workers, and transhumant pastoralists. A second category, often referred to as *agricultural producers*, are located primarily in the central semi-humid savannah and southern humid tropical zones, where agrarian organisations also include relatively more capitalised family farmers linked to commodity export chains. In recent decades, these groups joined forces behind the banners of peasant agriculture and family farms. In the 1990s, Sahel countries' agrarian organisations were mostly led by former youth *peasant* leaders of the 1970s (particularly in Senegal) who built autonomous associations in reaction to the previous top-down cooperatives model of the colonial and post-independence decades. Yet many of these pre-existing *produce*-based (e.g. cotton, groundnuts, fish, livestock) organisations also formed a fundamental part of ROPPA national platforms' membership base and leadership.

Though production is usually diversified at family farm level, national policies are strongly skewed towards specialisation in a handful of commodities prevalent in their respective agro-ecological zones (see Figure 9 below).¹¹⁷ Hence Sahel farmers mostly produce dry grains (millet, sorghum) in combination with livestock rearing (sheep, goats, cattle). Semi-humid savannah producers' major cash crop is cotton, while humid tropical producers grow cocoa, coffee, oil palm, and rubber (*Ibid*). Population density is highest in the southern humid tropical zone,

¹¹⁷ Only Senegal and Nigeria have territories that stretch across all three zones.

followed by the semi-humid savannah. This has been accentuated by Sahelian populations' southward migration patterns, reinforced by soil degradation, droughts and famines most prevalent in the drylands (1970s-1980s).

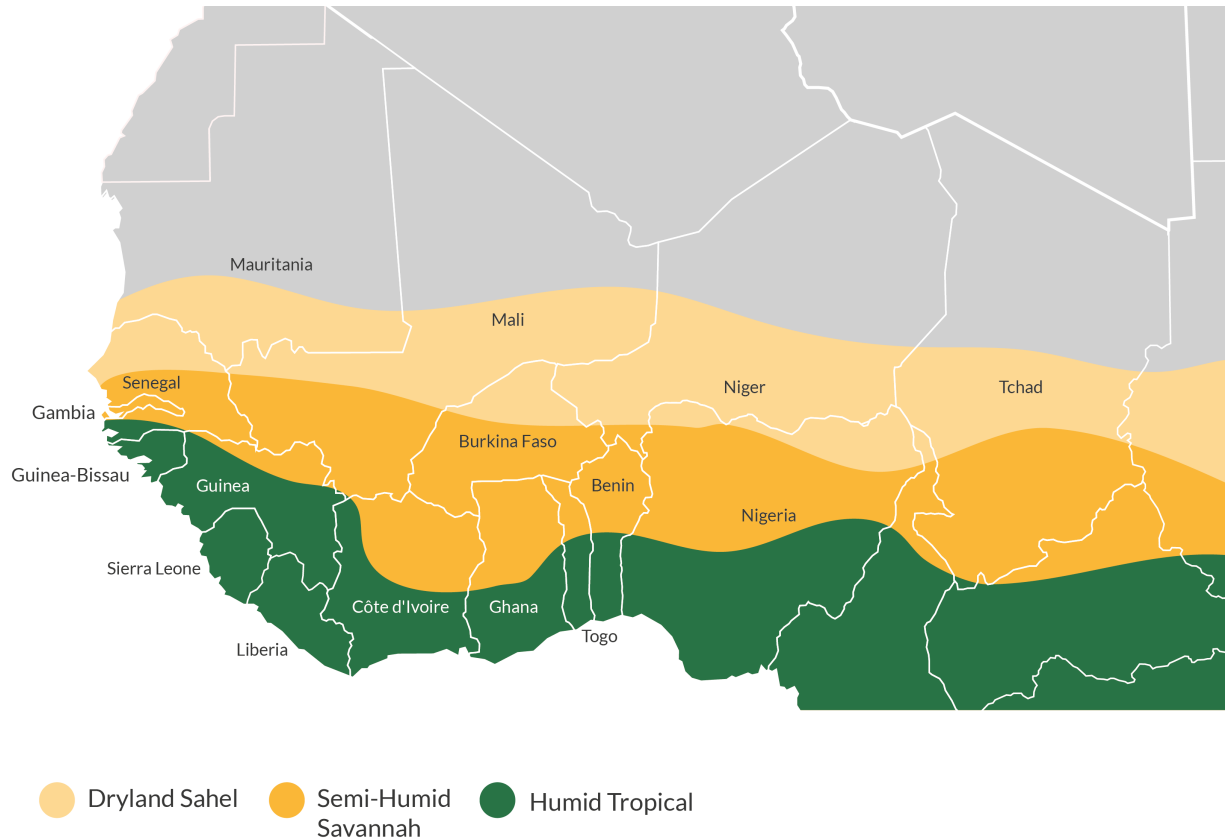


Figure 9: *West African Regional Agrarian Territories*¹¹⁸.

Almost all West African plots have mixed farming systems, which most often combine cash and food crops (including crops serving both functions, e.g. maize¹¹⁹). Most West African agricultural commodity producers are also small-scale. Hence "cocoa production in West Africa is produced mainly by smallholders – an estimated one million in Côte d'Ivoire and 800,000 in Ghana. [The] few large-scale plantations in both countries [...] represent a small percentage of total output" (Toulmin, Guèye, 2005:25). Likewise, cotton "is produced by an estimated six

¹¹⁸ Author's own design, partly based on FAO, 2001. Graphics by Luísa Vieira.

¹¹⁹ Interview CS-WA6.

million smallholder households, on farms varying from 3-20 ha, mainly in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Chad, and Burkina Faso" (*Ibid*).

Despite significant overlap between food and cash crop farming, West African family farmers are also socially differentiated. This is due largely to the fact that *peasants'* main source of policy formulation, funding, and implementation is the national state, while *agricultural producers'* is primarily dependent on negotiations with commodity chain enterprises. Territorially-based peasant organisations primarily obtain their means to invest and sell production from state agencies. Agricultural producer organisations receive financial services, training and rural extension, and sell their produce to former public (but increasingly privatised) agro-industrial firms. Hence,

There are two types of professional and peasant organisations. There are the peasant organisations, which have a territorial status, and deal with all of the farmers' problems. [And] there are the *filières* [i.e. commodity chain] professional organisations. The cotton producers' organisation deals with the cotton chain: its organisation, access to inputs, [and] defence of its cotton producers' interests. Conversely, the territorial organisation, in a way the role played by [Senegal's national platform] CNCR, is to say "we family farmers, these are our needs, our ambitions, we take part in the definition of policies", and so on. The fact that both types of organisation exist and combine their activities is a positive thing.¹²⁰

To what extent are these features of West Africa's agrarian landscape the product of 20th century history? What do relative policy advances or setbacks for peasant family farmers under past and present international food regimes reveal for West Africa's peasant family farmers' political agency in its different agrarian territories today? How do West African regional territories and networks, class bases and discourses, policy representation and negotiation, and dialogue spaces interact in shaping ROPPA's agrarian policy agency?

This chapter looks at the formation of the West African agrarian organisations throughout three successive international food regimes spanning the 20th century, their merging as ROPPA at the turn of the 21st, and the opening up of regional policy spaces to participation shortly thereafter. It aims to depict the multi-generational accumulation of social force and political organisation, as well as adaptations to challenges posed by shifting political-economic cycles, including: peasant resistance and survival strategies under French colonial rule (1870s-1930s), struggles for agrarian policy space towards and after achieving national sovereignty (1930s-

¹²⁰ Interview CS-WA6.

1970s), and autonomous agrarian organisation building during transitions to democratic regimes under globalisation and neoliberal hegemony (1970s-2000s).

4.1 West African rural communities under colonial rule

4.1.1 West African peasantries in tributary social formations

Though the nearest tropical region to Europe, West Africa was historically protected by the Sahara Desert and a barren coastline functioning as natural ramparts to full conquest by foreign powers. Until the late 19th century, European penetration across Africa was limited to coastal forts, trading posts, and incursions into river valleys. The West African economic centre was the Sahel ('coast of the Sahara' in Arabic), as attested by the medieval empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay, which thrived through trans-Saharan trade networks and supplied the Mediterranean with gold. After the 1500s, the discovery of gold and silver and the rise of plantations in the Americas coupled with increased slave trade from ports mostly located in West Africa's southern tropical belt gradually reduced the geopolitical significance of the Sahel hinterland. This macro-historical evolution marked the West African political-economic configuration to this day, as summarised by Hart (2013:5):

After half a millennium of increasingly intensive commerce with Europe and the rest of the world, West Africa today is polarized into two zones, one quite developed, the other neglected and depopulated; but [...] the historical relationship of the two has been reversed [...]. The coastal zone now boasts of metropolitan ports [...] which funnel the agricultural products, timber and minerals of the forest out into world markets. The interior, now deprived of the trans-Saharan trade that brought its former glory, serves mainly as a reservoir of cheap labour for the South.

At the 1885 Berlin Congress, European powers roughly split the West African territory by assigning most land to France, and areas with most trade and population to Britain (Hart, 2013). However, in both French and British colonies land ownership was altered much less drastically than elsewhere on the continent:

The *économie de traite*¹²¹ of West Africa was characterized by agricultural export production by peasant farmers, and in some cases by larger-scale indigenous producers, and typically organized by metropolitan

¹²¹ First coined by French geographer Jean Dresch, the term *économie de traite* (i.e. merchant trading economy) designated the unequal "exchange between imported manufactured goods and exported primary agricultural goods supplied by peasants within the setting of traditional village production", whereby "peasant societies supply an

trading houses through various intermediary layers of merchant capital. The *économie de traite* did not therefore entail widespread dispossession. Its patterns of commoditisation of rural economy proceeded without the institution of private property rights and markets in land (Bernstein, 2005:68).

The agrarian political economy of French West Africa (*Afrique Occidentale Française*, AOF, 1895-1960) was affected by the abolition of the slave trade (1848 in France) and slavery (1905 in AOF), and by the growing demand for commodities fuelled by industrialisation under the French Third Republic (1870-1940) (Hidalgo, 2014). Key West African commodities prized by European powers included cocoa and oil palm in southern tropical forest regions, cotton in the intermediate savannah, and groundnuts in the Sahel (Bernstein, 2005). France's agricultural choices still bear imprints on the region. For instance, production of groundnuts became prevalent across Senegal, while cotton became the main crop of French Sudan (Mali) and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso).

Many post-slave trade West African ruling elites and coastal slave merchants reconverted to growing commodities used as industrial raw materials in metropolitan cities. Groundnuts in Senegal were increasingly produced and traded to produce soap, candles, wax, fodder, or margarine in Bordeaux or Marseilles (Hidalgo, 2014; Hart, 2013). As for the French textile industry, drastic interruptions in cotton supply resulting from the US Civil War (1860-1865) and World War I (WWI) and II (WWII) incentivised cotton production in AOF (particularly present-day southern Mali) (Roy, 2012).

Slavery in precolonial West Africa had encompassed a wider variety of labour regimes, rights and duties, and relationships to families, castes, villages and kingdoms than the plantation slavery model prevailing in the Americas. The majority of slaves were war captives from outside villages and kingdoms, while internally recruited minorities were most often enslaved from debt bondage or imprisonment (Hart, 2013). The most common typology divides the former into 'crown', 'household' and 'land' slaves, the first two types of which were under certain conditions allowed to hold their own plots of land (Searing, 2002; Roy, 2012).

When France decreed abolition in 1905, approximately 25% of AOF's estimated population of 8 million at the time were slaves, though proportions were generally higher in

infinitely higher work effort than its equivalent in Europe [...] thus guaranteeing profits for the [European firms]" (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976: 30-31).

Islamic and trading zones and lower elsewhere (Boutillier, 1968, cited by Roy, 2012). Although traditional labour regimes became less hierarchical and many freed slaves reorganized production through family farms, emancipation from slavery was uneven across the colonial territory and often replaced by other types of forced labour. Indeed, the *Code de l'Indigénat* (30 September 1887), "formalized the status of the colonised as subject, as opposed to citizen, of the empire, with related obligations such as taxation and forced labour" (Roy, 2012:54-88), and lasted until 1946.

The destruction of the *slavist* mode of production [...] and the recasting of a productive model based on the family farm, would be long and sinuous. [...] The French would be very ambivalent with regards to the abolition of slavery, remaining cautious of managing the local social order, and most of all their access to labour (*Ibid*: 54).

The land was worked by people of all social categories and backgrounds – from warriors to traders, from slaves to free castes (e.g. artisans, *griots*). Although distinctions *did* exist between fishermen, pastoralists, and peasants, West African division of labour was not akin to European understandings of 'peasantry' versus other forms of labour. Kinship (age, gender) and social hierarchy (including caste/profession divisions and slave/master relations) were often stronger determinants of labour differentiation, including decisions on crop allocations, food and seed stock management, and who could or could not farm their own land (Roy, 2012).

According to Samir Amin's (1974) typology of pre-capitalist modes of production and social formations, West African agrarian structures combined 'community', 'tribute-paying', 'slave' and 'simple commodity' modes of production with mercantilist long distance trade, and a gradual penetration of capitalism from at least the late 19th century.¹²² Some community modes of production were more egalitarian, others more hierarchical (e.g. the Fulani of the Senegal river valley, or Hausa in Northern Nigeria) (Amin, 1974).

The possibility for former 'crown' and 'household' slaves to access land in regions where slavery was prevalent undoubtedly enabled many to transition towards community family farming after abolition. For non-slaves and in areas where tribute-paying modes of production

¹²² Early forms of capitalist accumulation in the first decades of the AOF colonial state were generally restricted to enclaves near cities and fertile river valleys (such as horticulture for both internal and external markets established near Dakar, along the coastline, the Casamance region, and Senegal river valley - in the case of Senegal), or where plantation systems had been established, such as in tropical Côte d'Ivoire (Bernstein, 2005; Oya, 2007).

predominated, rural communities' *de facto* ownership of the land was part and parcel of the social and political equilibrium. Indeed, ruling classes "monopolize[d] the political organisation of society and exact[ed] tributes from rural communities", but rulers' "eminent domain of the land" was counterbalanced by the "rural communit[ies'] actual ownership" (Amin, 1974:59). Indeed,

By the mere fact that he is a member of a clan, the peasant is entitled to a plot in the holding belonging to the clan. Consequently, the process of proletarianization, that is, the process of separating the producer from his [or her] means of production (here, the natural means: the land) is *impossible*. Therefore it will be noticed that the integration of societies based on this type of the mode of production into the world capitalist system – which is the case with almost all the African peasant societies today – leads to *impoverishment without proletarianization* (*Ibid*).

Hence, while under European or Japanese feudalism, a landlord could 'free' their peasants and thus proletarianize them, this could not occur under the community/tributary modes prevalent in most African precolonial societies, given the degree of societal interdependence generated by social formations based on kinship - stretching from extended family at the collective farm scale, to clan or tribe at larger governing territorial scales – as the main balancing factor between chief or elder patriarchal rule and communities' innate right to land. This still has significant implications for West African land policy issues today, both in peasants' capacity to resist land grabbing, but also in the persistence of patriarchal forms of traditional land governance (see chapter 5).

4.1.2 French colonialism and the *économie de traite*

Though parts of Senegal had been occupied by the French for centuries, most of what became AOF was conquered through military campaigns intensified after the Berlin Congress (1885). Whereas resistance to colonial occupation was at first mostly military (1880-1900), it subsequently developed into revolts at village level (1900-1914). In some cases chiefs rallied across entire administrative regions as colonial authorities looked to consolidate their territorial grip. Many revolts targeted specific colonial impositions, such as taxation (leading to the repressive 'pacification' of Côte d'Ivoire during 1900-1915) or drafting for World War I (as in western Upper Volta in 1916-1917) (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976).

In Senegal, the post-slavery downfall of traditional ruling aristocracies coincided with emerging Muslim religious orders whose ranks included peasants, former household slaves and caste artisans (Faye et al., 2007; Hart, 1982). While local aristocracy members integrated into the colonial administrative apparatus, *marabouts* (leaders of West African Muslim Sufi orders), especially the *Mourides*, partially overtook the groundnut economy and expanded it into the hinterland. There, they founded communities (*dara*) in which agricultural, social and religious roles and activities intertwined (Diop et al., 2010; Hidalgo, 2014). Accumulation strategies based mainly on groundnut production and trade engendered a powerful class of *marabouts*, with strong influence over the peasantries (Diop, 1972; Diop et al., 2010).

In Sahelian West Africa, "*marabout* revolts became acts of Islamic resistance against European conquest" (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976:26), with the Sufi Muslim movements of *Mouridism* in Senegal and *Hamallism* in French Sudan¹²³ gaining many followers at the turn of the 20th century by offering patriarchal forms of protection to peasants. Religion, security and self-sustaining agricultural production offered an alternative to the social strife and disorientation provoked by drastic political and economic transformations (Diop et al., 2010):

These mass movements originating in the peasantry were not so much expressing demands as a general refusal of the new powers in the name of a return to the previous pre-capitalist social order. But the gap between revolt ideology and economic realities condemned these attempts to failure. The result was the collapse of ancestral beliefs and traditional socio-political values. The desperation that followed explains the massive recruitment to new religions that appeared as the last refuge of a distraught society: hence the growth of sects and more or less syncretic Churches, especially from World War I onwards. This movement affected the Muslim world as well as the animist countries more exposed to Christian currents (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976: 34).

Partly reluctant recognition of *Hamallism* by colonial authorities from 1914 favoured its spread in the Sahel region though it intermittently suffered from severe repression (particularly at its birthplace in Nioro-du-Sahel, Kayes region of present-day Mali, in 1940). *Hamallism*'s "struggles for African peoples' identity and dignity" (Diop et al., 2010:82) put many of its followers at odds with other West Africans perceived by the former as complicit or passive towards the colonial administration, resulting sometimes in violent clashes. *Hamallism* eventually also contributed to the formation of the future pro-independence *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA) political party, founded in Bamako in 1946 (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976).

¹²³ Pre-independence Mali.

Mouridism in Senegal initially also preoccupied colonial administrators, given the growing numbers of peasants enrolled in a form of "patriarchal collectivism" (Suret-Canale, 1964, cited by Diop et al., 2010:82) that praised industriousness under strict allegiance to the *marabouts*, though founder Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba advocated only non-violent forms of resistance to colonialism. The expansion of *Mouride* agricultural communities into the interior and consequent forced eviction of pastoralist villages from the 1930s would nevertheless be tacitly accepted by French authorities, given the latter's straightening alliance with the former through the increasingly lucrative groundnut trade (Diop et al., 2010).

The Sufi brotherhoods of Senegal and other Sahelian countries were also carriers of centuries-old intellectual endogenous cultures and knowledge harking back from the days of the Sahelian kingdoms, from which sprung "an educated elite of lawyers, priests and teachers [who] shared literacy in Arabic with the merchant class" (Hart, 2013: 14). Their koranic schools educated many young male disciples (*talibés*) some of whom would later become key figures of the post-independence political landscape, such as Senegal's first post-independence council president Mamadou Dia (Colin, 2006).

The superimposition of French capitalism onto pre-existing West African agrarian structures was essentially based on large trading firms¹²⁴ that purchased groundnuts, cotton and other commodities from African farmers, urban manufacturing in Dakar, and related transport infrastructure (Oya, 2007). Syrian-Lebanese traders also competed for a share of the surplus, often as intermediaries between West African producers and French firms. Pre-existing pan-West African trading networks such as those established by the Dioula (of present-day Mali) and Hausa (of present-day Niger and Nigeria) were also prevalent and interlinked with the above (Hart, 2013; Samaké et al., 2007).

Among rural West Africans, to whom the production of cash crops was delegated, significant dynamics of agrarian change occurred as a result of a reconversion of ruling elites from slave trade to cash crop farming and selling, and a competing ascension of merchants and farmers who stood to benefit from the new farming and trading opportunities. Colonial authorities and

¹²⁴ On import-export firms in AOF, including British-Dutch *Lever* (later *Unilever*) see Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976:31.

trading firms frequently struck agreements with local ruling elites, not least in order to be able to manage a huge territory in which French settlers represented a very small minority.

The colonial administration (which was required to have a self-sustaining budget, without relying on transfer of funds from the metropole) was built to attend the interests of the French trading houses and merchants. Hence the expression *économie de traite* is not just economic, but also a political term describing the prevailing regime implanted upon AOF's agrarian territories. Policy efforts were geared towards the production and transport of commodities from AOF to metropolitan France, and import of low-value French manufactured goods to West Africans. This involved the building of ports, railways, and roads, the colonisation of the hinterland through alliances with religious leaders, and large-scale seasonal migrant labour from neighbouring colonies (Faye et al., 2007; Diop et al., 2010).

4.2 Controlling or emancipating peasants? Cooperatives and *animation rurale*

4.2.1 From colonial to independent-state agricultural cooperatives

4.2.1.1 French West Africa's *Sociétés Indigènes de Prévoyance* (SIP)

The effects of the 1930s Great Depression in Europe had indirect repercussions on Africa. Colonies functioned as buffers for European economic interests in AOF, where rudimentary credit systems avoided contamination from the financial crisis, and enabled businesses to repatriate profits from colonies to metropole (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2010). West African peasantries suffered the most from the collapse of export crop market prices combined with persistence of taxation and forced labour (Gamble, 2009). This accelerated rural-urban migration, where insufficient formal employment opportunities could not absorb the increased labour influx. The economic shock led to "deterioration of the condition of local workers, which collapsed in relation to that of the European workforce" (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2010:342).

French officials perceived peasants as less threatening to the colonial apparatus than the intellectual elites springing in the cities. Nevertheless, most of the population lived in rural areas, and AOF had relatively scarce resources to manage a huge territory. The increase in colonies'

production of cash crops to withstand the 1930s economic crisis in France was perceived by colonial administrators as needing to be combined with additional state capacity to exert authority over an increasingly restless West African peasantry. Growing international criticism of the *indigénat* status, including a 1930 International Labour Organisation (ILO) norm outlawing forced labour¹²⁵ in the colonies (Gamble, 2009) additionally pressured French colonial imperialism. Meanwhile, rural exodus in mainland France was rapidly changing livelihoods, incentivising sectors of French society to safeguard values associated with rural life, and the interests of farmers, large and small. The importance for the urban class alliance sustaining the French Third Republic (1870-1940) to secure a small farmer support base (in competition with the landowning aristocracy and Catholic Church) drove expansion of agrarian policies not just in the mainland. It also influenced agricultural policymakers in colonial territories (Chauveau, 1994; Roy, 2012).

Thus, France shifted its strategy towards West African peasants to a carefully constructed (though ultimately failed) cooptation attempt to strike a wide-ranging class alliance, promising West African peasants more dignified economic and social conditions to secure their fidelity. It was symbolized by a paternalistic, 'noble savage'-type discursive recasting of rural West Africans from non-descript 'labourers' to idealized 'Black peasants' in official colonial discourse.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, they legally remained 'colonial subjects' under permanent threat of physical coercion and forced labour as per the *indigénat* status until its abolition in 1946 (Gamble, 2009). The contradictory combination of a pro-peasant agrarianist discourse with a centralising and authoritarian colonial state resulted in what Chauveau (1994) termed 'bureaucratic populism'.

Attempts to merge colonial authorities' perceptions of French agrarian modernisation with West African traditional rural organisations of mutual aid and collective work¹²⁷ (Assogba, 2008) first took shape as village-level collective warehouses (*greniers collectifs*) for the management of food stocks and seeds. Increased area and labour power used to farm export

¹²⁵ On coercive recruitment for agriculture and construction in AOF – from river valleys to the tropical south – see Gamble, 2009 and Samaké, 2007.

¹²⁶ On this projection of romanticized nostalgia for European agrarianism onto West Africa see Gamble, 2009; Chauveau, 1994; Roy, 2012.

¹²⁷ Examples of these include: the *Tons* of the *Malinke* in Mali; the *Naam* in Yatenga and the *Sosoaga* of the Mossi in Burkina Faso; the *Adjolu* among the *Fons* in Benin; or the *Efidodo* of the *Éwés* in Togo (Assogba, 2008:18).

commodities had reduced rural communities' capacity to produce sufficient staple crops¹²⁸ and made them more vulnerable to food shortages (McKeon et al., 2004). Traditional grain reserve systems thus served as inspiration for colonial authorities' to coercively superimpose their own versions of these onto West African rural societies. The colonial grain stores "to which "each family head had to contribute 100 to 150 kg of grains per year on average [became] one of the most unpopular institutions of the colonial period" (Gado, 2010:25-26), not least because food surpluses were more often than not used to feed security forces and administrative corps.

Following a model experimented in Senegal after WWI, grain stores evolved into *Sociétés Indigènes de Prévoyance* (SIP)¹²⁹ and were instituted in French Sudan (Mali), Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) and Niger from the 1930s (Gado, 2010). In addition to seed storage and supply functions, the SIPs – for which peasants paid both taxes and mutualised contributions – offered loans, and later became points of sale for groundnuts, cotton and other commodities (Faye et al., 2007), though only a small fraction of the surplus was left for trading middlemen and peasants.¹³⁰

The colonially-imposed SIPs were to become the institutional structure through which mildly reformist (Chauveau, 1994; Gamble, 2009) currents within the colonial regime projected their idealisations of a rapidly disappearing agrarian France onto West African peasantries. Although West African SIPs had in theory at least 100.000 members per unit, most peasants ignored the existence of SIP governing structures, and those who were constrained into reserving part of their production for the collective warehouses resisted these measures through various means, such as maintaining their own undeclared parallel stocks, and handing over only damaged or lower quality produce.. Meanwhile, *notabilités indigènes*¹³¹ became key intermediaries between colonial authorities and peasants. Some of their descendants would later fulfill important local administrative functions in post-independence governments (Roy, 2012).

¹²⁸ Millet, sorghum, beans, maize, sweet potatoes, among other crops (McKeon et al., 2004).

¹²⁹ Short for *Sociétés indigènes de prévoyance, de secours et de prêts mutuels agricoles* (Foresight, Relief, and Mutual Loans' Indigenous Societies), the SIP were a "transposition of a model experimented in Algeria, Tunisia and Indochina at the end of the 19th century, later tested in Senegal and finally diffused in the other countries of AOF" (Roy, 2012: 82). This specifically French colonial institution bears some similarities with the marketing boards of former British colonies, with the difference that the word *prévoyance* has a connotation of stocking food (as opposed to selling produce). Its name is nonetheless misleading given that under colonial administration SIPs' primary role was to ensure metropole and colonial cities' supply in agricultural commodities.

¹³⁰ See Faye et al., 2007: 81.

¹³¹ 'Indigenous notables': village traditional local authorities.

Membership was mandatory for agricultural heads and chiefs, although representation in governing boards was merely symbolic, with real decisional power controlled by the local French colonial administration. Notwithstanding reforms allegedly aiming to make these structures more democratic – rebranding them into SMPR (*Sociétés Mutualistes de Promotion Rurale*¹³²) in 1953 and later SMDR (*Sociétés Mutualistes de Développement Rural*¹³³) in 1956, and having two thirds of the SMDR members chosen by elections (with one third still chosen by the governor) – these institutions were alien to the majority of West African peasants. In practice they served for the colonial state to gain a foothold across the vast territorial hinterlands of AOF and attend the interests of French colonial administrators, and an elite of African civil servants (Gado, 2010).

Despite the dominance of *économie de traite* export-import dynamics, internal agricultural markets and monetized trade also partially developed. Smoked or dried fish was traded from the coasts to the interior, as was livestock from the Sahel to the tropical regions (Samaké et al., 2007). After SIPs were gradually equipped with processing units in the 1930s, rural markets developed across Senegal's central groundnut basin region (Faye et al., 2007). The steep decline in global trade following WWII even led to relative increases in internal manufactured goods' production chains. Landlocked cotton producing regions supplied coastal markets when textile supplies from the metropole dwindled. Decreased supply of manufacturing goods also led several French industries to set up processing plants (such as vegetable oils) in Dakar.

Whereas during the first decades of French colonialism in West Africa, the administrative apparatus was mostly preoccupied with securing control over the territory, creating the infrastructure and labour conditions for the *économie de traite* and attending little more than the trading houses' interests, the later period of French colonialism heralded greater state involvement in large-scale investments, institutionalisation of colonial policies in areas such as education and agriculture, and (after 1946) increased political and labour rights and coverage of social services as concessions to rising African labouring class and independence movements (Fall, 2006).¹³⁴ This phase was eventually perceived as too costly by conservative circles in

¹³² Rural Promotion Mutual Societies.

¹³³ Rural Development Mutual Societies.

¹³⁴ Official European historiography divided French colonial rule into three periods: i) military and administrative conquest (until 1914); ii) '*mise en valeur*' roughly translating as 'adding value through investment' (1920-1940) ; iii) (1945-1960) pre-decolonisation. However, a more critical political economy historical lens finds the main point of

metropolitan France,¹³⁵ and after export crop prices peaked in the early 1950s (1952 for cocoa, 1955 for groundnuts), a critical mass of French business interests pragmatically realigned their strategies towards acceptance of political independence, and focused on securing their economic interests. This enabled French ruling classes to cut short the rise of public costs incurred by post-WWII harmonisation of colonial labour and social security regimes with metropolitan ones (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976, 2010), as part of a global process of "negotiate[d] neocolonial transitions" (Moyo, Yeros, 2005:21) between Britain or France and the local elites of their respective colonial territories.

The breaking up of the French West African federation into eight different sovereign states was the outcome of a struggle between class alliances favouring development of a regional-scale internal market versus those that favoured an extroverted economic model. Given (Ivorian first president) Felix Houphouët-Boigny's close links to domestic and powerful French export-oriented interests, (Senegalese first President) Léopold Sédar Senghor and other partisans of a federal internal-market solution that would have privileged unity amongst former AOF territories were eventually defeated. The division of AOF into smaller independent states reflected a more wide-ranging struggle at the level of the African continent between partisans of a united confederation versus those favouring a looser association between newly independent nation-states (Asante, 2010). The former's governments had deeper links to 'inward-looking' articulated class alliances, while the latter's had stronger political-economic ties with 'outward-looking' disarticulated ones.

4.2.1.2 Post-independence cooperatives and popular education through *animation rurale*

After WWII, French colonial authorities ceded ground to effervescent African nationalist movements (mostly urban-based but rapidly spreading into rural areas), and gave more policy space to its internal reformist elements. This occurred through *animation rurale*, a "non-

transition in the mid-1930s - thus Coquery-Vidrovitch (1976) distinguishes two main phases, respectively 'predatory' (1890-1930) and 'imperialist' (1936-1952) colonialism.

¹³⁵ On global capitalism's 'second food regime' in the 1930s and post-1945 French colonial empire see Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976.

revolutionary action model within a Cold War and increased [African] nationalism context" (Chauveau, 1994:34), which rose from post-war colonial administrators' critique of previous authoritarian and centralised policies. *Animation rurale*, which incorporated strands of French Catholic progressive currents, was later to be revamped by post-independence administrations in Sahelian countries in a more radical vein, incorporating some of its principles into their own visions of African Socialism.

As formulated by such independence leaders as Léopold Senghor in Senegal or Sekou Touré in Guinea, African Socialism was an anti-capitalist, anticolonial and pan-Africanist current, whose observation of traditional African societies nonetheless made them reject the centrality of class struggle in the African context, given that in their vision these societies already contained many elements associated with socialist ideals. In this sense they differed from the more orthodox and Marxist-inspired 'scientific socialist' African regimes of Mali under Modibo Keita (1960-1968) in its final years (Roy, 2012), Benin under Mathieu Kerekou (1972-1990), or Guinea-Bissau under Luís Cabral (1973-1980) the latter of which aimed to transition from production on small-scale plots to collectivisation (Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991). African Socialism of the first sort proved influential in the Sahelian countries, especially in the early 1960s (Dévés-Valdés, 2008).

The first independent government of Senegal witnessed a significant, albeit short-lived, attempt to break with the *économie de traite* and emancipate the peasantries from internationally dependent super-exploitation. Through an ambitious programme centred on village cooperatives aiming to reconcile 'traditional' African values with 'modern' development objectives, it followed principles of African Socialism as theorized by Senghor, Mamadou Dia and other key figures of Senegal's Socialist Party (PS).

Mamadou Dia, who led Senegal's domestic policies as President of the Council of Ministers in the country's first administration (1958-1962) was "passionate about participatory, democracy-generating development through the social economy of the cooperatives" (Colin, 2006:142). Dia was influenced by the Economy and Humanism international network, which included the likes of Brazil's Josué de Castro, who authored the influential *Geography of Hunger* (1946) and held key positions at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Theorized and put into practice by French Catholic priest Louis-Joseph Lebret and economist François Perroux,

the Human Economy current emphasised the cooperative movement and *animation rurale* as virtuous forces for development, and left a lasting imprint on agrarian organisations of both West Africa and South America¹³⁶ (Chauveau, 1994; Dévés-Valdés, 2008). Dia most eloquently laid out his programme in his *Instruction Circulaire 32* of 21 May 1962, entitled 'Doctrine and problem of the evolution of the cooperative movement in Senegal'. In this government document, he underscored the strategic dimension of *animation rurale* in the Senegalese countryside:

The cooperative movement, at the level of the real human communities, constitutes the mode of organisation enabling to preserve ancient community values and to promote a modern development that can solidly take hold in the world's contemporary current of evolution [...]. In a first phase, cooperation has been initiated essentially in rural areas with the goal of reclaiming the circuits of production and commercialisation of the groundnut, dismantle the *économie de traite*, and put an end to the usurious indebteding of peasants [...]. *Animation* [...] aims for the masses to take on their own responsibilities across the board, in view of development, that is, [their] civic, economic and cultural responsibilities [...]. This option implies a straightened collaboration both at the top and on the ground between *animation* and cooperation [...]. *Animation* [...] tends to favour not only the socio-economic structuration, [but also] the socio-political structuration, and must lead to the creation [...] of the base rural communities, cells of peasant democracy in which the cooperative movement will harmoniously integrate (République du Sénégal, 1962: 1-3).

A coordinated effort of state support (including a national development bank, agricultural commercialisation office, and local Regional Centres for Development Assistance (CRAD) in charge of seed distribution, credit and stocks management), to these "development cooperatives" gained traction during 1960-1962 (from around 100 in 1959 to over 1100 in 1962) and aimed in the medium term to diversify production, and reduce economic dependency from the groundnut economy. The cooperatives were planned to eventually become financially autonomous 'self-managed rural communities' and take over production and distribution activities from the state (République du Sénégal, 1962; Colin, 2006; Cruise O'Brien et al., 2002). The national *animation rurale* programme elaborated by the Ministry of Planning and

¹³⁶ Lebreton (1897-1966) and his IRFED (Institute of Research and Training for Harmonized Development) counselled and assisted the Senegalese government during the independence transition years (1958-1960) and Mamadou Dia's government (1960-1962) (Colin, 2006). Lebreton, who had been in Brazil (1940s-1950s) also influenced Rio de Janeiro's then auxiliary bishop Dom Hélder Câmara, who would later become a key figure of Liberation Theology in the 1960s and contribute to the creation of the Base Ecclesial Communities (CEBs) (Dévés-Valdés, 2008). CEBs would be one of the key rural grassroots organisations to spread during the final years of the military dictatorship (1970s) and democratisation process (1980s), and influence the constitution of the Landless Workers Movement (MST). The Economy and Humanism network also proved influential elsewhere in South America, including Uruguay's cooperative movement (see chapter 3), with links to COPROFAM member CNFR (Interview IR-SA1). Decades later, the Latin American Centre for the Promotion of Human Economy (CLAEH), headquartered in Montevideo, became a key funder of the IFAD support programme to COPROFAM in the 2010s.

Development, and implemented through the local *Centres d'Expansion Rurale* (CER) (Assogba, 2008; Cruise O'Brien et al., 2002) invested considerably into establishing permanent training and popular education initiatives with the base communities, and ultimately aimed for the "emergence of a true peasant power, organized through development cooperatives" (Colin, 2006: 144).



Figure 10: Mamadou Dia (left centre, wearing sunglasses) visits a Senegalese rural cooperative. Source: Mbaye, 2012 (25:16).

Despite peasants' general support and enthusiasm for Mamadou Dia's rural development programme (Cruise O'Brien et al., 2002), concern increased among international business interests linked to the groundnut trade, but also among *marabouts* who controlled a significant part of its production and distribution in Senegal. Established *Mouride* groundnut trading networks rejected the cooperatives' explicit goal of obtaining economic autonomy. Explicit state support to peasant family farming through village cooperatives indeed undermined established production and commercialisation circuits that had underpinned dependent global insertion of the Senegalese economy under French colonialism.

Local notabilities, chiefs, political party cadres and government officials also considered peasants' growing political autonomy and empowerment a threat to their political power, as new community leaders from the village cooperatives' training programmes increasingly challenged their colonially-enshrined intermediary role (Colin, 2006). The closing of ranks between international business, the *Mouride*-controlled groundnut sector, and local political administrators, eventually led to the ouster of Dia in December 1962, ending a short-lived but significant attempt of delinking the Senegalese rural economy from its chronic dependency on the global groundnut trade.¹³⁷

Local administrators ended up maintaining essential control over management and channelling of central government funds, ultimately leading to widespread clientelistic and corrupt practices, which severely undermined the state-promoted cooperatives' credibility in the eyes of the peasantry (McKeon et al., 2004; Cruise O'Brien et al., 2002). The end of preferential access to the French groundnut export market (1967) prompted president Senghor to abandon the cooperatives' training and educational components, leaving them even more vulnerable to rent capture and political diversions from their original goals (Colin, 2006).

Another post-independence West African case of state-promoted cooperatives whose members partially but "truly participated in the definition of modes of organisation and had a real decision-making power" (Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991:870) was Niger under President Hamani Diori (1960-1974). Diori initiated an *animation rurale* programme in Niger from 1963, training and sensitising peasants on policy issues, to "directly associate the population to the most important decisions" (Gado, 2010:28). Young motivated *animateurs* (trainers/popular educators) thus generated a parallel 'drive belt' between central government policy formulation and local implementation, enabling trained peasants to be better informed, voice opinions,¹³⁸ and partly bypass local civil servants and political cadres reluctant to share power with the peasantries.

An important ally was the state-subsidized *Association des Radios-Clubs du Niger* (ARCN), a widespread rural radio network that contributed to democratize technical knowledge and

¹³⁷ "By the mid-1960s [...] the country's commercial groundnut economy covered about half the cultivated surface; supplied at least three quarters of rural money incomes; contributed 23 percent of GNP and about 80 percent of exports; and, through oil-processing plants, constituted 42 percent of total industry" (Hart, 1982:66).

¹³⁸ On peasant mobilisation through these structures, and on the youth's function as relays for technological innovations to peasants, see Gado, 2010:29.

practical information. It reverberated a political discourse emanating from central government that emphasized 'popular participation', while access to information revealed local administrators' and traditional authorities' poor management of resources and abuses of power. The risk posed by this increased political consciousness to the dominating state alliance with local village aristocracies eventually took its toll:

Technical cadres and political appointees, concerned with preserving their privileges, started to show their concern with the excessive freedom of expression given to peasants by the *animation* agents, particularly during public meetings. [...] Gradually, cooperative structures [...] became strongly influenced by the party-state. In village meetings, speeches by the Party's secretary general substituted those of the *animateur rural*. Later with the elimination of the *animation* directorship for development, and the creation of regional and sub-regional services for planning, the *animateur rural* became a "floating" agent with no administrative link [...] *Animation rurale* is a perfect illustration of a structure that favoured a participatory dynamic, which public authorities were quick to curb (Gado, 2010:29-30).

Thus, even initially promising cases of peasant political empowerment in post-independence Sahel countries (e.g. Senegal and Niger) were severely limited by the enduring weight of colonial and traditional political structures. State authorities were ultimately more concerned in maintaining social stability and increasing productivity across export crop chains than fomenting peasant power. Although the experience of 1960s-1970s state-led cooperatives generally left peasantries with bitter failed expectations, the memory left by some experiences' short-lived virtuous qualities, and a critical examination of why they failed, provided inspiration for a new wave of autonomous movements starting in the mid-1970s (Cissokho, 2009).

4.2.2 Autonomous territorial peasant movements in Sahel countries

In most West African nations, after attempts at transferring political and economic power to the peasantry faltered and as post-independence euphoria waned, export-commodity dependency and clientelistic state relations with the peasantry were reasserted. States gradually assumed trading functions, "adding the roles of banker, industrialist and landlord to that of merchant monopolist and bureaucratic provider" (Hart, 2013:36). Economic and political power was shared to varying extents by incumbent politicians, military and police forces, and state bureaucrats, alternately "supported or checked by weak civil interests: unions, chiefs, and businessmen" (*Ibid*:34). Appropriation of peasants' surplus by urban elites and formal urban

labour aristocracies translated into high dependency on commodity exports, a low taxation base, and difficulties in stimulating the home market, despite some significant investments aimed at increasing national food production.

The severe drought and devastating famine experienced in 1973-1974 throughout the Sahel bore a series of regional institutional initiatives led by West African independent nation-states. At the regional level, it yielded the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).¹³⁹ Global repercussions of the 1973-1974 drought¹⁴⁰ enabled CILSS to benefit from the support of an OECD countries' funding coordination group, the Sahel and West Africa Club (CSAO). Yet in parallel, despite providing immediate relief to famine-stricken rural populations, external 'food aid' considerably harmed peasant family farmers' access to national and regional markets saturated with dumped food surpluses from US and European subsidized overproduction (Moyo and Yeros, 2005).

The scale of the drought's devastation in terms of loss of human lives and herding animals for the Sahel's predominantly agropastoral family farmers led many of them, particularly rural youth, to deeply question the premises of the prevailing commodity-export dominant economic model. Indeed, "[m]uch of the desertification that contributed to the Sahel famine occurred as export-oriented cotton and peanut cultivation depleted aquifers, pushed peasants off land and squeezed transhumant pastoralists into ever-smaller grazing areas" (Edelman and Borrás, 2016:22). The combination of the above-described global, regional, national, and local factors created space for the embryo of the local and national agrarian organisations that would come to form ROPPA.

The most significant autonomous and politicised peasant movements organising outside state-controlled structures developed in Burkina Faso and Senegal from the 1970s onwards, and lay the groundwork for the national federations that would later comprise ROPPA across the West African subregion. The basis for these movements' initial growth lay in: i) a solid grassroots foundation of interlinked village associations, frequently led by educated youth who migrated to

¹³⁹ *Comité permanent Inter-états de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel.*

¹⁴⁰ These included the first World Food Conference convened by the FAO in 1974. The conference yielded the creation of two global-level institutions aiming to complement the FAO's work, whose insufficiencies were made patent by the devastating famines in West Africa and Bangladesh (1974): UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 1974, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in 1977 (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2010).

cities during the 1973-74 Sahel drought and later returned with alternative ideas for organising outside the discredited state cooperatives system, in alliance with rural youth and women, and in consultation with elders and village chiefs¹⁴¹ (Cissokho, 2009); ii) negotiated development assistance from key Northern INGOs and Church-linked organisations¹⁴² whose involvement and financial support substantially increased post-1973-74 (Arcand, 2003; de Janvry and Sadoulet, 2004; McKeon et al., 2004).

Originating in Burkina Faso's northern Yatenga Province, the *Groupements Naam* were set up under the guidance of school teacher-turned-popular educator Bernard Lédéa Ouedraogo, as self-directed alternatives to state-induced associations of young cultivators (*Groupements de Jeunes Agriculteurs* - GJA) in the late 1960s (Pedersen, 2001). Reclaiming the traditional Mossi collective village institution of the *Kombi-Naam* ('Youth Power') (Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991), they built a grassroots movement that combined ancestral values of solidarity and traditional knowledge with the learning and dissemination of modern techniques. This had a decisive role in implementing water and soil conservation practices in a particularly challenging agro-ecological Sahel region, and contributed to strengthening women and youth organisations. Members of the more literate younger generation became crucial actors in obtaining funding from external donors, thereby reducing the near monopoly of control and channelling of resources by elders and village chiefs (Rahmato, 1991; Pedersen, 2001).

Increased and sustained INGO-support allowed village-level *Groupements Naam* to federate at provincial, and later national level. This eventually yielded the *Federation des Unions de Groupements Naam* (FUGN), which by the early 1990s spanned 17 provinces, with 3000 *Groupements* representing 350.000 members from 1200 villages (Arcand, 2003; Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991). The alliance between Swiss NGO Six-S¹⁴³ and the *Groupements Naam* provided

¹⁴¹ This was part of careful balancing strategies, given that exclusion from decision-making under traditional patriarchal kinship social structures, and their reproduction through local political party and administrative posts, had partly been the motivation for the setting up of these structures.

¹⁴² These broke the frequent top-down and unsustainable micro-project patterns of most of their counterparts, that had often led to externally dependent and project-specific local associations. They included Six-S, Maisons Familiales, and ENDA-Tiers Monde. One bilateral cooperation agency - the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) - also supported peasant organisations (McKeon et al., 2004).

¹⁴³ Six-S stands for *Se Servir de la Saison Sèche en Savane et au Sahel* (Taking advantage of the dry season in the Savannah and Sahel). Composed of mostly Christian-linked organisations (Misereor, CCFD, *Action de Carême Suisse*, CEBEMO, *IDA Suisse*; Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991) during its years in activity (1977-1992) it was a unique North-South

a stable and reliable source of funding and technical support that was later extended to other emerging West African movements, and enabled these to retain a significant degree of autonomy while contributing to build national-level, and later regional-level connections:

Six-S, was without a doubt the most original and significant support mechanism. This international NGO, established in 1977 with funding from several European NGOs and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, was designed specifically to support emerging village-based groups in West Africa and encourage them to federate. In consequence, Six-S operated unobtrusively by providing village groups with a flexible and renewable fund, co-financed and managed by them. From 1977 to 1992, Six-S supported thousands of village group activities, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal, and helped to establish 73 unions of groups and two federations, the Federation of Naam Groups in Burkina Faso and FONGS in Senegal. Six-S was also a source of discreet and respectful technical assistance, and its general assemblies offered an important occasion for farmer leaders in the subregion to meet and strategize (McKeon et al. 2004:12).

The first encounters between the burgeoning West African peasant associations of the mid-1970s occurred through the Six-S network, particularly at the headquarters of the Centre for Social and Economic Studies of West Africa (CESAO) at Bobo-Dioulasso in Burkina Faso. Burkinan, Senegalese, Malian, Nigerien, Gambian, Ivorian, and Togolese peasant leaders met on different occasions and founded the Association for the Training of African Peasants (AFPA) to organize further training encounters, mostly in Burkina Faso and Senegal (Cissokho, 2009). At their 2nd International meeting in CESAO on January 1976, rural association representatives vowed to "work together, amongst peasant leaders, to expose our difficulties, build trust and confidence in ourselves, to see our common problems and prepare the creation of the international organisation" (Cissokho, 2009:118), laying the groundwork for the sub-regional peasant network to be formalized some decades later.

As in Burkina Faso, informal village associations usually initiated by women or youth sprung from the late 1960s in Senegal. Some encouraged others to set up autonomous peasant organisations after the 1973-74 drought, initially outside the country's central groundnut basin, and eventually across all regions: from the Senegal river zone in the North - the Walo Friends' Socio-Educational, Sports and Cultural Association (ASESCAW) - to the Casamance Association of Young Farmers (AJAC) in the South. Nine of these joined forces to form the Senegal Federation

NGO founded by Switzerland's Bernard Lecomte and Burkina Faso's Bernard Lédéa Ouedraogo that supported existing peasant organisations not affiliated to political parties or religious entities, and gave them more independence than most in the allocation and management of a series of small grants (Cissokho, 2009).

of Non-Governmental Organisations (FONGS) in 1976, obtaining state recognition in 1978.¹⁴⁴ Other local associations later joined, including the *Entente de Bamba Thialène*, created by Mamadou Cissokho, later to become leading founder of CNCR and ROPPA in the country's eastern region (de Janvry and Sadoulet, 2004; Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991; Hrabanski, 2010; McKeon et al., 2004; McSween, 2015).

Famara Diedhiou, a former rural extensionist who at the time presided the Senegalese network of the *Maisons Familiales Rurales* (UNMFR)¹⁴⁵ led the federative effort and became FONGS' first president (1976-1990). According to Diedhiou, this early unison sought to avert the risk of having associations played off against each other by distrustful state or political party authorities (McKeon et al., 2004; Cissokho, 2009). Suspicion from *marabouts* was also partly assuaged by peasant organisations' frequent and genuine references to the Koran, especially at initial stages, notwithstanding youth organizers' efforts to update religious teachings by focusing on peasants' practical needs, and collectively organise in the face of food insecurity (Cissokho, 2009; Hrabanski, 2010).

4.2.3 Agricultural producer organisations in francophone West Africa

Whilst in francophone West Africa the term 'peasant' denotes the family farms that are not necessarily or primarily connected to export commodity chains, 'agricultural producers' encompasses precisely those. West African agricultural producers may be small or medium-sized with some degree of capitalisation, yet almost always mix commodity production for external markets with food for self-consumption and internal markets. Indeed, savings from commodity earnings allow producers to invest in food crops, not least because cotton and other agricultural commodities necessitate crop rotation¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁴ The name's reference to NGOs is misleading, as these were actually peasant associations, but were legally required to register as NGOs to be distinguished from state-promoted cooperatives and *groupements* (McKeon et al., 2004).

¹⁴⁵ The *Maisons Familiales Rurales* were borne out of cooperation with Christian NGOs linked to French Priest Lebret's Economy and Humanism movement, and had established a dense network of local village associations across Senegal (Cissokho, 2009).

¹⁴⁶ Interview CS-WA6.

Although the political initiative of ROPPA has been originally led by the Sahel's 'territorial' peasant organisations, the relative force of its agricultural producer organisations, particularly in semi-humid savannah and humid tropical zones, is significantly linked to investments made by farmers historically linked to commodity chains, as explained by Mamadou Cissokho:

In Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, [Burkina Faso], it is financing for cotton [production] that began structuring [producer organisations]. As with coffee, cocoa, banana, pineapple [in the humid tropical zone]. [...] The producer is someone who has a bit of money, who invests in agriculture. [...] He may have 20, 30, 35 hectares [...]. He produces, especially for exports, but he also goes [to the internal market]. Those same producers farm maize. Because when you have cotton cycles in your field this year, next year you cannot make cotton there. Only maize and sorgho can be done every year in the same plot. But for groundnuts, beans, cotton - you need [crop] rotation. [...] They buy animals, which give them organic manure, put it in the field. And when the [crop season] has not turned out well, you take two oxen, and you sell them.¹⁴⁷

Cases of less politicized and more instrumental forms of 'sectorial' (as opposed to all-encompassing 'national') *animation rurale* (Assogba, 2008), did provide literacy and other technical and organisational skills to agricultural producers, without generating the political backlashes spurred by 1960s attempts to foment peasant power in order to break from colonially-inherited commodity dependency. This occurred most significantly in export crop state-led enterprises where the workforce was sufficiently organised to make collective demands and pressure management to negotiate better conditions for production and commercialisation, such as in the cotton sector and hydro-agricultural development projects, most notably in Mali (Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991).

The 1973-74 drought's economic and social strife, and its strain on public resources was closely followed in 1974 by acquisition of majority stakes¹⁴⁸ in the French Textile Development Company's (CFDT) West African country subsidiaries, by cotton-producing francophone West African states (Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Senegal). Despite previous decades of colonial surplus extraction from francophone West Africa to France, CFDT's public state-enterprise status meant its activities could be better regulated than private companies, providing more space for progressively-minded civil servants to reinvest a greater part of the company's profits into strengthening peasant family farmers' economic capacities.

¹⁴⁷ Interview AO-WA10.

¹⁴⁸ The French state maintained a 40% minority stake until IMF-supported privatisation in the 2000s.

CFDT indeed "chose to have cotton produced by small-scale farmers, with quite interesting remunerations [and] enabled them to access inputs".¹⁴⁹ These were also used for food production (e.g. sorghum, maize) given the need to rotate crops to produce cotton in the semi-humid savannah zone.¹⁵⁰ CFDT's surplus was also channelled into literacy and vocational training of peasant family farmers in the cotton producing semi-humid savannah regions, paving the way for agrarian organisation representation in the following decades. As recalled by a French agronomist who worked in West Africa in the 1970s:

CFDT completely integrated [its activities on a regional scale]: it bought inputs for all the African companies, and then sold the cotton for these African companies [...]. It was a state-owned company so they did not have the mandate to [maximise profits]. Hence all of the money [was reinvested into] the commodity chain. They also organized self-managed markets [...]: produce was sold by paid farmers' associations [...] and this remuneration enabled them to finance sustainable development, infrastructure, teachers. So we generated territorial development.¹⁵¹

West African states inherited the cotton monopsony from the French company, "with a pricing regime guarantee for producers" (Roy, 2012:146). CFDT technician roles were increasingly taken up by West Africans, "effectively gridding the cotton production zones and gaining [family farmers'] trust" (*Ibid.*). But they also inherited a concentration of resources stemming from the metropole's textile industry chain, which contributed to create a privileged stratum of relatively capitalised and highly-skilled family farmers. Hence, while Mali had "only 431 rural extensionists for 2 million hectares of cultures across the country, CFDT employ[ed] 320 for the [cotton area's] 60.000 hectares" in 1967 (Roy, 2012:192).¹⁵²

The *Associations Villageoises*¹⁵³ (AV), first created in the cotton producing region of southern Mali during the 1973-74 harvest, ensued from a standoff between cotton producers and the recently nationalized *Compagnie Malienne de Développement des Textiles*¹⁵⁴ (CMDT). Though informal associations existed in the late 1960s around cotton silos, a key turning point occurred when cotton producers contested CMDT agents' cotton weighing malpractices and

¹⁴⁹ Interview AR-W1.

¹⁵⁰ Interviews CS-WA6 and AO-WA10.

¹⁵¹ Interview A-WA1.

¹⁵² Indeed, as shown by Selwyn's (2012:75) study on rural labour agency in Brazil's grape export chain, "capital's strategies to recruit, train and discipline, and then retain an increasingly skilled workforce, exist in a dialectical relationship with organised labour's strategies of ameliorating its own working and living conditions".

¹⁵³ Village Associations.

¹⁵⁴ Malian Company for Textiles' Development.

threatened to interrupt production or stage village revolts if weighing responsibilities were not transferred to them (Roy, 2012).

A new generation of CMDT local managers helped break the deadlock by suggesting to train producers and support them in organising associations. This would enable producers to assume not just weighing but other tasks related to input supply, credit, and commercialisation. By the late 1980s, AVs had been established in more than 1000 villages across southern Mali, taking over most functions of the productive process, literacy campaigns, investments in social equipment (maternity wards, health centres, wells) and technical supervision (statistics collection, animal vaccines). However, they remained dependent upon CMDT support, and had not yet established a significant inter-village network, nor developed a wider political consciousness that would allow them to influence policies at national level, as would occur in the 1990s (Gentil and Mercoiret, 1991).

Although they shared characteristics with the majority of peasant family farmers, West African 'agricultural producers' are usually at the more capitalised end of these, given levels of investments in commodity chains in which they have been able to negotiate better producing conditions (e.g. prices, credit, rural extension, debt relief, infrastructure, local social services). This was mostly enabled after independent West African states in the 1960s and 1970s created or inherited state monopoly enterprises to regulate commodity chain production, processing and distribution and reinvest profits into the chain. The higher efficiency of growing cotton with yearly crop rotation or groundnut under mixed agropastoral systems (as opposed to large-scale plantations) has underpinned the rationale for contract farming schemes negotiated with small and medium family farmers. Literacy and training programmes fomented by African independent states between the 1960s and 1980s created a rural labouring class fraction of agricultural producers capable of collectively negotiating policy conditions with commodity chain agro-industrial management.

4.3 Gaining a foothold in national and regional agricultural policy: the birth of ROPPA

4.3.1 Senegal's CNCR and the Sahel Peasant Platform

4.3.1.1 The National Rurals' Cooperation and Concertation Council (CNCR)

After a second major regional drought in 1984-85, the Senegalese government's negotiations with global financing institutions (IMF, WB) pressing for state disengagement to service debt yielded the New Agricultural Policy (NPA) (1984). The consequent dismantling of state-support structures – e.g. the National Office for Cooperation and Development Assistance (ONCAD) in 1979 – and transfer of responsibilities to private sector and peasant organisations had significant impacts on Senegal's socio-economic rural landscape. One was the creation of a new type of rural economic association: the *Groupements d'Interêt Économique*¹⁵⁵ (GIE). These could be formed by two or more individuals as rural organisations eligible for loans, and allowed more flexibility and self-management than cooperatives. GIEs would eventually organise their collective representation structures according to agricultural sectors of activity (e.g. horticulture, fishing, pastoralism, forestry) (McSween, 2015).

FONGS had initially focused on training and informative activities, stimulating exchanges between its members. Within the NPA context, FONGS increased its economic role, setting up cereal banks and mutual exchanges between crop surplus and deficit villages (McKeon et al., 2004). It also managed to round up members' savings and external donations to buy a 4% stake in Senegalese agricultural bank CNCAS¹⁵⁶, and obtained a seat on board meetings to push for better conditions in family farmers' access to credit. By the early 1990s, FONGS "had expanded [...] to include 24 regionally based associations throughout the country, totalling over 2.000 village groups with an active membership of about 400.000" (McKeon et al., 2004:13). Yet when the Senegalese government engaged in discussions with WB and IMF over the next Agricultural Structural Adjustment Programme (ASAP) in the early 1990s, FONGS was not allowed to take part, allegedly because this was not the only federation representing Senegal's rural people (Cissokho, 2009; McKeon et al., 2004).

¹⁵⁵ Economic Interest Groupings.

¹⁵⁶ *Caisse Nationale de Crédit Agricole du Sénégal*. National Agricultural Credit Bank of Senegal.

Faced with that impasse, FONGS took a series of steps that decisively increased the Senegalese peasant movement's i) capacity to present alternative policy proposals; ii) representative legitimacy; iii) visibility vis-à-vis government officials, and thus greater access to policy negotiations. FONGS first obtained FAO support to organise consultations with their bases in 1991, from which they formulated alternative proposals to ASAPs. The following year, it decided to share the results of this process in a national forum, entitled 'What future for Senegalese peasants?' (Cissokho, 2009; McKeon et al., 2004).

To draw government and general public attention, it took advantage of the crucially significant rural vote in upcoming national elections (mid-1993), by announcing on posters across the country that the event (February 1993) would be opened by the President of the Republic, bypassing formal invitation channels. This 'direct action' communication tactic pushed peasants' demands into pre-election public debate, when stakes were still high (Cissokho, 2009; McKeon et al., 2004). The event was ultimately opened by the Prime Minister in Dakar, and became "the first time that the peasant movement had called representatives of government services and donors to a public debate" (McKeon et al., 2004:14) and been given due attention at governmental level.

It was also the first event gathering all Senegalese national peasant federations. Despite previous tensions between some and FONGS, centripetal forces proved stronger and led to the creation of the Rurals' National Concertation Committee (CNCR)¹⁵⁷. This fusion occurred on 17 March 1993 in Thiès, uniting FONGS and 6 other federations.¹⁵⁸ Weathering funding crises since the post-1984 state retreat, the federations saw FONGS' wider and more secure pool of external resources as strategic for their own survival. For FONGS, its incorporation into a more representative national 'confederation of federations' strengthened claims for participation in policy negotiations. Additionally, manifold complementarities between members soon became evident. This was true from the local village base, where peasants benefitted from overlapping memberships (FONGS delivering training and communication activities, GIEs enabling access to

¹⁵⁷ 'Cooperation' was later added to 'Concertation' in the national platform's name, both represented by the second 'C' in CNCR. The first 'C' also later changed from 'Committee' to 'Council'.

¹⁵⁸ Three GIE federations (fishermen, pastoralists, horticulturalists), two cooperatives federations (agriculture and animal husbandry), and one rural women's federation. Two forestry workers' federations joined CNCR in 1995, and many others in subsequent years.

credit, UNCAS¹⁵⁹ cooperatives facilitating commercialisation), to national and international levels (e.g. FONGS external contacts enabled FENAGIE-*Pêche* to partake in 1994 EU fisheries trade negotiations) (Cissokho, 2009; McKeon et al., 2004; de Janvry and Sadoulet, 2004).

CNCR began participating in evermore negotiations with government and multilateral organisation representatives, particularly with the WB. It also teamed up with the Association of Rural Council Presidents (APCR) to form the Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Development at the Base (ASPRODEB). ASPRODEB became CNCR's 'economic arm', which received funding from government and international agencies such as FAO and IFAD, for the implementation of small-scale projects at village level with funds managed by local affiliated peasant organisations. ASPRODEB was part of a drive aiming to increase CNCR's financial autonomy, by channelling economic surpluses generated by its family farmer members' activities, thereby reducing dependency on external funding (Faye, 2007).

Although self-defined as a movement, CNCR sought and obtained juridical recognition in 1996; by then, it represented around 3 million rural people, out of Senegal's population of 8 million (McKeon et al., 2004). Between 1994 and 1996, CNCR unsuccessfully attempted to meet the President of Senegal, who met yearly with labour unions and employers' organisations. CNCR's legitimacy in speaking for Senegal's rural people had enabled its involvement in the government's negotiations with the WB in 1996 on its Agricultural Structural Investment Programme (ASIP). CNCR members were frustrated at the government's slow and insufficient response to implement agricultural support policies, and in June 1996 left ASIP negotiations. Given that the WB would not proceed until CNCR returned to the negotiating table, the impasse effectively pressured President Diouf to finally meet with 150 CNCR representatives in February 1997. The meeting was a breakthrough: a substantial reduction in agricultural credit interest rates (from 14 to 7,5%), debt moratoria, public financing for soil improvement and the holding of high-level regular meetings were all approved and implemented (Cissokho, 2009; Oya and Ba, 2013; de Janvry and Sadoulet, 2004).

Thereafter, CNCR representatives met President Diouf once a year (1997-2000), the Prime Minister every three months, and the Minister of Agriculture once a week to review the

¹⁵⁹ *Union Nationale des Coopératives Agricoles du Sénégal*. National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Senegal.

agricultural and rural conjuncture (Oya and Ba, 2013), and influenced policies at several levels.

As current CNCR President Nadjirou Sall explained:

If we arrived at LOASP;¹⁶⁰ [...] if we arrived at the restoration of the Senegalese public programmes; [...] if we managed to reduce bank interest rates; [...] if we achieved [soil] phosphating; [...] for our lands, it's [all] linked to these spaces of dialogue. If we arrived effectively at the creation of instruments, in terms of rural extension, in terms of channelling funds for agro-silvo-pastoral research, it's linked to these spaces. These are daily spaces, that we try to occupy, and it continues. [...] The same goes for livestock. If we've accomplished subsidies for fishing, it's linked to these spaces. If we managed, for livestock, to subsidise a certain number of vaccines, clearly, it is linked to all of these spaces. These are processes that are built. [...] From 1976 until the 1990s, these efforts were met with success, because there was an opening of spaces for dialogue.¹⁶¹

4.3.1.2 Sahel's Peasant Platform (PFPS)

A key driver behind ROPPA's formation was its founders' perceived need to unite in the face of the newly created West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) (grouping together the CFA¹⁶² Franc zone's former AOF countries) in 1994, and its push towards negotiating a common external tariff and regional agricultural policy thereafter¹⁶³.

UEMOA's creation resulted from French restructuring of its neocolonial zone of influence as a result of internal macroeconomic pressures, dramatically manifested by a unilaterally imposed devaluation of the CFA franc¹⁶⁴ to half its previous value in 1994. The devaluation harmed West African import-dependent urban middle and working classes most, and "combined with market liberalisation and restrictions on credit, led to the collapse of many commercial farms, unable to compete with smallholders" (Toulmin and Guèye, 2005:27), thus evidencing the resilience of West African peasant family farms. Devaluation also made some food export sectors more competitive, enabling "Malian rice to recover a good level of competitiveness vis-à-vis its Asian competitors" (Blein et al., 2008:31).

¹⁶⁰ Agro-Silvo-Pastoral Framework Law, approved in 2004. See chapter 6 on family farm recognition in agricultural policy framework laws in West Africa.

¹⁶¹ Interview AO-WA11.

¹⁶² Originally standing for *Colonies Françaises d'Afrique* (French Colonies of Africa) during the AOF latter period (1945-1958), the West African common currency's CFA acronym was retained post-independence but now stands for *Communauté Financière Africaine* (African Financial Community).

¹⁶³ Interview AO-WA10.

¹⁶⁴ A remnant of France's former colonial empire, the CFA currency remains under significant control of the French state with about half of its total reserves held by France's central bank.

Hence, the opportunity to increase visibility of family farmers' role for national food security within UEMOA, combined with the potential threat of transferring policy responsibilities to a then inaccessible regional scale, led members of CNCR – the region's only national-wide peasant platform at the time – to reach out to similar budding organisations in UEMOA countries¹⁶⁵. Many agrarian organisation representatives already knew each other from common activities in the Six-S network. The CILSS conference on land tenure organised that same year in Praia, Cape Verde (see chapter 5), represented a further step towards the creation of national-level platforms and a regional peasant network (Cissokho, 2009; McSween, 2015; McKeon et al., 2004).

CILSS had had previous consultations with West African peasant associations since the 1980s, particularly after the 1984-85 drought (Edelman and Borras, 2016; Cissokho, 2009). Their headquarters in the Burkinan capital had allowed for informal contacts with Six-S to develop (McSween, 2015). CILSS mandated peasant representatives from Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger to organise their own delegation for the 1994 conference, which became an occasion for Sahelian agrarian organisations to unite. National platforms were to be built by federating territorially-based and producer-based organisations within a country into a single representative movement of each member country's peasantries. According to Gambian ROPPA co-founder and first NACOFAG¹⁶⁶ president, Mahamadou Fayinkeh:

We had the fourth land tenure meeting in Cape Verde, organised by CILSS. Most farmers' organisations were there. [...] We didn't have the means [to all fly to the same country to meet], so we seized the opportunity to meet at night [where Mamadou] Cissokho [was staying], to discuss the issue of how we can come together. 'We have seen that these people they want to privatize our land, with this new land tenure system [...]'. So, 'as farmers organisations, what should be our stand?' [...] Then we assigned Cissokho, to go to [CILSS member] countries so that we can establish our [national] farmers platforms. That's one platform in each country, so that we can discuss land issues [at the regional level]. This is [from] where ROPPA emanated.¹⁶⁷

After the above-mentioned evening meeting with Mamadou Cissokho, the 27-peasant representatives announced their intention to create a *cadre de concertation*¹⁶⁸ of the Sahelian producer organisations. CILSS (and its donors grouped in CSAO) agreed to support the creation

¹⁶⁵ Interview AO-WA10.

¹⁶⁶ National Coordinating Organisation of Farmer Associations Gambia.

¹⁶⁷ Interview AO-WA4.

¹⁶⁸ The term is used by ROPPA to designate policy dialogue spaces, whether only amongst agrarian organisations or with government.

of national peasant federations in its 9 member countries. The Sahel Peasant Platform (PPS) was thus officially created in 1996 (Cissokho, 2009).

Meanwhile, West African countries established national federations, with usually one key association leading in federating the others, as occurred with current ROPPA president Ibrahima Coulibaly's Association of Professional Peasant Organisations (AOPP) founded in 1995, which represented a wide array of Mali's agrarian organisations (Roy, 2012). Coulibaly clarified:

AOPP was the largest and strongest of the [Malian] federations at the time. [...] The history of AOPP started a bit earlier than that of others. It is not necessarily [that of] the ancient [cooperative] organisations. It was other types of organisations: mutual services associations, grain banks, common commercialisation groups... In fact, a whole array of commercialisation [initiatives] that had established themselves, given that the state was no longer there after the structural adjustment programme, and thus started to establish AOPP, which continued to grow [...]. It is the only organisation that is present in all regions of Mali, [...] that has personnel in the regions, that has actions, that makes the information circulate back up [from the base]. So it is the one that has the [largest] membership and representation compared to other [Malian peasant organisations].¹⁶⁹

AOPP later joined forces with Malian producer organisations to eventually form the National Coordination of Peasant Organisations (CNOP) in 2002. Forms of participation and political dialogue with national governments varied, but most UEMOA members adopted the French model of the *Chambres d'Agriculture*,¹⁷⁰ often established with French funding (McKeon et al., 2004). This was successfully resisted in Senegal, given CNCR's previously recognized legitimacy to engage in direct policy negotiation with high-level government representatives. On the other hand, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire established *Chambres d'Agriculture* as institutionalised spaces for agricultural policy dialogue. These are perceived by ROPPA national platforms as dominated by an entrepreneurial expansionist agricultural model, opposed to ROPPA's defended sustainable peasant family farming paradigm. Still, ROPPA's national-level member organisations, particularly CNOP in Mali, have in some cases successfully influenced policy through dialogue in the *Chambres d'Agriculture*.

At regional level, CILSS' openness to consultation with Sahel peasant associations was reinforced by international organisations' promotion of civil society participation in the 1990s, including at UN global conferences. This engendered global connections: at the 1998 meeting of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, CNCR and other budding ROPPA members met La

¹⁶⁹ Interview AO-WA22.

¹⁷⁰ Chambers of Agriculture.

Vía Campesina¹⁷¹ (LVC) representatives, enabling 6 of ROPPA's 13 national platforms to eventually join LVC (McSween, 2015).¹⁷² Participation within CILSS meetings was nevertheless viewed as merely consultative and non-committal, with control over policy processes exerted by government representatives and little room for political agency. Still the constitution of PPS following the 1994 Praia CILSS Conference significantly boosted subregional articulation between national-level agrarian organisations.

The evaluation of WB-promoted ASAP and ASIP was a turning point for the West African peasant network. After an FAO and WB 1997 report that glossed over the negative impacts of ASAPs in the region was rejected by CNCR, they conceded that a new evaluation be conducted with participation of agrarian organisations. A CNCR representative was tasked with conducting meetings in West African countries, and, crucially, was allowed to hold peasants-only meetings. This represented a fundamental step to enable greater coherence amongst each nation's agrarian organisations, in a safe environment of mutual trust, generating better conditions to later negotiate with governments.¹⁷³

In 1999, CNCR organized a WB-funded subregional workshop to share the evaluation results.¹⁷⁴ It included peasant representatives not only from the PPS (CILSS) countries, but also other UEMOA members such as Côte d'Ivoire and Benin¹⁷⁵, invited by FAO and WB. There, peasant organisation leaders demanded the creation of a regional network that went beyond only CILSS or UEMOA countries. Indeed, although UEMOA was then the most consolidated West African regional organisation, it was not representative of regional realities, given the demographic and economic weight of non-UEMOA member Nigeria, and the growing implications of regional agricultural policy and trade agreements negotiated at ECOWAS level.

¹⁷¹ CNCR had previously been a member of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) but saw in LVC an organisation that was much more akin to its own policy visions and discourse. Adoption of LVC's concept of food sovereignty would later prove influential in ROPPA's negotiation of regional trade policy at ECOWAS level (see chapter 7) (McSween, 2015).

¹⁷² In the tropical zone, meanwhile, the export commodity producers that make up Côte d'Ivoire's ANOPACI were key members of IFAP, as "members of the Executive Committee and president of the Cocoa Group" (Amoakon, 2007:154).

¹⁷³ Interview AO-WA10.

¹⁷⁴ Interview AO-WA10.

¹⁷⁵ These countries, whose northern zones are on the semi-humid savannah transition zone between humid tropical and dryland Sahel only later became CILSS members.

On the other hand, the 15-country bloc headquartered in Abuja was considered a manageable scale within which to operate and present policy demands, as opposed to expanding beyond that subregional level (McSween, 2015; Cissokho, 2009; McKeon et al., 2004).

Furthermore, regionally framing the peasant network at ECOWAS-level reflected deeper considerations on the need to surpass enduring territorial divisions brought about by rival European colonial powers a century earlier. Mamadou Cissokho's own origins in the predominantly Mandinka transborder region of eastern Senegambia and western Mali enhanced his crucial role in enabling the creation of family farmer national federations beyond UEMOA and into ECOWAS's non-francophone countries, thanks to the persistence of West African linguistic networks across former inter-European colonial borders:

When the Senegalese go to Gambia, they do not speak English or French, [they speak] Mandinka or Wolof. In Guinea-Bissau, I went several times, I spoke Mandinka. I went to Sierra Leone, Liberia, I spoke Mandinka. Because Mandinka over there is the reference. [...] In our region, we have lived here together, culturally. We have many shared cultural values. Food and also history [...]. So [we chose] ECOWAS because UEMOA is basically the [common CFA] currency and the colonies. Whereas ECOWAS is culture, development, it's much wider. And these are populations that always migrated, because in the time of the [West African] empires, there were no [internal] borders¹⁷⁶.

Besides colonial-era territorial divisions, extending West Africa's budding family farmer network from its Sahel cradle to its semi-humid savannah and humid tropical agrarian territories required incorporating corresponding rural social differentiations in its discursive self-representation. The humid tropical region in particular – where cacao and coffee is produced in mostly small but also some large plots – hosts family farmers with the region's highest levels of capitalisation. This led Côte d'Ivoire's ANOPACI to request adding the term 'agricultural producer' to 'peasant' organisations when deciding on a name to designate the newly created regional family farmer network. Thus, the birth of the West African Network of *Peasant and Agricultural Producer* Organisations sealed joint representation of the region's wider rural labouring classes, across its three main dry, semi-humid, and humid agrarian territories. As one CNCR technical advisor put it:

This distinction [between] peasant organisations [and] agricultural producers [is somewhat artificial given that] peasant organisations are [also] agricultural producers. But [we adopted this terminology] because of the forest countries, especially Côte d'Ivoire. Sure, maybe we [Sahelian peasants] are agricultural producers *at a lower scale*, in comparison. Because they consider themselves real industrial agricultural enterprises.

¹⁷⁶ Interview AO-WA10.

ANOPACI's president for instance has quite large [landholdings and capitalisation], differently from our presidents. But fortunately, they understood that if they did not forge alliances with other [smaller-scale peasants], it would not work.¹⁷⁷

4.3.2 Peasant and agricultural producer organisations in ECOWAS

ROPPIA was thus formally constituted¹⁷⁸ in July 2000 during a meeting in Cotonou, Benin, with approximately a hundred peasant representatives from 10 West African countries.¹⁷⁹ Their priorities were several inter-related agricultural and trade policy regional negotiations (see chapters 6 and 7), launched or under way at the time: i) UEMOA negotiations for an Agricultural Policy (PAU) and Common External Tariff (CET); ii) European Union - Africa Caribbean Pacific (EU-ACP) negotiations for inter-regional Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), including with ECOWAS¹⁸⁰; iii) formulation of ECOWAS's regional agricultural policy (ECOWAP/CAADP)¹⁸¹; iv) negotiations for ECOWAS's transition to a customs union and definition of its own CET tariff lines. ROPPIA's efforts to influence these different negotiations were met with varying levels of success, but all of them represented significant processes of growing participation and opening up of regional invited spaces to agrarian organisations. Their inter-related nature made ROPPIA representatives synergically build up regional agricultural and trade policy technical knowledge as well as strategic political negotiation skills, as assessed in more detail in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

The UEMOA agricultural policy formulation process did not initially include ROPPIA, relying instead on a consulting firm that organised workshops with farmers without considering their national and regional representative bodies. When informed, ROPPIA leaders complained to the UEMOA Commission President, and eventually obtained UEMOA funding to undertake

¹⁷⁷ Interview AO-WA7/AO-WA12.

¹⁷⁸ ROPPIA's origins in CILSS and UEMOA countries account for the location of its main office in the same city that houses both subregional organisations' headquarters: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. It now has a presence in 13 of the 15 ECOWAS countries, and a total membership of approximately 22 million farmers.

¹⁷⁹ These were: Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Togo. Ghana and Sierra Leone would join in 2006, and Liberia in 2010. Cape Verde and Nigeria have at times sent observers to meetings but do not have ROPPIA national platform members.

¹⁸⁰ After the signature of the Cotonou Agreements between EU and ACP countries in June 2000 (one month before ROPPIA's official creation in the same city).

¹⁸¹ The previously existing ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) formulation process was eventually merged with the African Union's (AU) Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), of which it became a 'regional compact', yielding the acronym ECOWAP/CAADP.

autonomous consultations (McSween, 2015). These culminated in a regional workshop in October 2001 on 'Common Agricultural Policies and Family Farms within the UEMOA area'. A memorandum presented two months later at the UEMOA Heads of State Summit by a ROPPA delegation of around 500 farmers from 8 countries took Heads of State by surprise (McKeon et al., 2004). In Mamadou Cissokho's words:

In 2000 we created ROPPA, but UEMOA also decided to formulate its agricultural policy. So we 'forced the door open' [figuratively speaking] to get in there. And there, we defended the Regional Fund for Agro-Sylvo-Pastoral Development [...]. The most important thing is that we managed to get in there, and for the first time in the history of the [West African] Heads of State, in 2001 they received us in their meeting room.¹⁸²

Language on the underlying principle defended by ROPPA regarding family farmers being at the centre of PAU was included in the policy document signed by UEMOA Heads of State on 19 December 2001 (McKeon et al., 2004). However, this did not reflect an actual incorporation of ROPPA's policy proposals, particularly relating to trade tariff measures (McSween, 2015). UEMOA's technical staff was seen by ROPPA as "technocratic and very [economically] liberal, [focusing essentially on] the large export commodity chains" (Coulibaly, 2007:141). ROPPA actively campaigned in their countries' respective media outlets against UEMOA's agricultural policy (McSween, 2015). PAU was never implemented, "given its [...] dephasing with agricultural realities of the subregion" (Coulibaly, 2007:141).

Meanwhile ECOWAS kick-started its own regional agricultural policy (ECOWAP) formulation process in 2003. Unlike with UEMOA's PAU, ROPPA was promptly included in the ECOWAP formulation steering committee, and managed to convince government members to debate different policy scenarios and potential impacts on family farming. This qualified ROPPA's capacity to set the terms of the policy agenda by co-elaborating alternative policy proposals in partnership with engaged researchers, and thus increased the legitimacy and negotiating power of the regional peasant network vis-à-vis member countries' and ECOWAS civil servants.

These in turn were lauded by ROPPA as a "very motivated, very engaged" corps of regional technicians whose contribution to a participatory ECOWAP formulation process was decisive (Coulibaly, 2012:1). ECOWAS support for ROPPA's active engagement linked it to its top civil servant, President of the Commission Mohamed Ibn Chambas. Chambas increasingly consulted

¹⁸² Interview AO-WA10.

with the agrarian organisation's representatives before official negotiations, organising parallel meetings with ROPPA, and even inviting them to partake in Heads of State meetings, where they were frequently asked to voice opinions on public policy (McSween, 2015). Hence a few decades after creating their first autonomous associations and networks in the 1970s, West African peasants were now allowed a seat at the negotiating table on significant regional policy matters. The conditions under which they would manage to influence these policies during the 2000s is examined further in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Conclusion

In the first period examined in this chapter (1870s-1920s) rural West African societies were characterised by labour regimes in which tributes levied by elders or chiefs were counterbalanced by communities' ownership of land. Traditional governing structures were shaken by colonial invasions, prompting many younger peasants in the Sahel to take refuge under Sufi Muslim orders. Under AOF's first 'predatory' colonialist phase (1900s—1930s) (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976), the *économie de traite* organised investments to extract commodities at minimum cost (i.e. without densely gridding the barren hinterland), taxed and coerced peasants into forced labour, and sold them cheap manufactured goods from the metropole. Meanwhile, internal migrant networks across contiguous AOF territories still maintained pre-existing trans-regional solidarities, reinforced by populations' shared opposition to colonial domination.

AOF's second 'imperialist' phase (1930s-1950s) (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1976) corresponded to a state-led reassertion of France's economic interests in the colonies, given the reduced margin for global trade and accumulation elsewhere during the Great Depression and WWII. As African urban civil servants and labourers' demands for better social conditions grew, colonial administrators sought to gain support from peasantries through 'bureaucratic populist' (Chauveau, 1994) investments into rural social services and in state-controlled marketing boards. Yet genuine state efforts at emancipating peasantries only came with national independence, whereby investments in the reclaimed agricultural cooperative structures were combined with popular education and training (e.g. Senegal, Niger). These initiatives faltered however, given significant underestimation of entrenched dependent class interests within the former West

African colonies and the continuity of economic surplus extraction to the benefit of French and other Global North business interests through unequal exchange.

Though externally-oriented class alliances defeated a sovereign West African federation project at the time of political independence from France (1958-1960), the 1973-74 drought and famine in the drylands brought home the vital necessity of articulated regional integration, and generated the creation of CILSS, grouping together Sahel countries. Regional integration on a contiguous territorial basis was further reinforced with the creation of ECOWAS in 1975, upon the initiative of the humid tropical zone's anglophone and francophone countries led by Nigeria, particularly with the aim of securing an economic and monetary zone, thus challenging the principle of regional integration premised upon the CFA franc zone.

The latter was nevertheless restructured into a new regional integration organisation – UEMOA – in 1994, in conjunction with France's unilateral decision to devalue its former colonies' shared currency by half its value. Simultaneously, ECOWAS's mandate was refocused into reducing internal trade barriers towards a common market and enforcing regional peace and security. State disengagement from agricultural policy imposed through IFI debt-bonded structural adjustment from the 1980s in combination with democratic transitions in most states by the 1990s contributed to open space for burgeoning peasant organisations to take on greater economic implementation and political representation roles.

Senegal's specificities allowed its peasants to build a robust agrarian organisation, CNCR, which obtained unprecedented access to state policy-making negotiations in the late 1990s. CNCR thus became a legitimate standard-bearer for the creation of a regional network initially based on the Sahel zone (PPS), later expanding to the remaining members of the ECOWAS region to form ROPPA in 2000. Experience gained in UEMOA's faltered agricultural policy process allowed ROPPA to gain further clout at ECOWAS level, and step up attempts to influence policies across the West African region, as will be seen in further detail in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Chapter 5 - Secure and Equal Access to Land

Introduction

Since the 1990s, a WB-led market-based narrative, followed by aid agencies and developing country governments, has influenced international land policy debates. It replaced a discourse on *redistributive reform*, predominant until the 1970s, with *tenurial reform*, emphasising land titling and privatisation benefits over other forms of land tenure for optimal resource allocation, and, purportedly, food production and supply (Manji, 2006). The post-2008 global land rush accelerated drives for land privatisation and land tenure governance deregulation, as agricultural lands became perceived as both safe financial assets and external food supply guarantees for net food importing countries. 80% of 2,8 billion hectares of allegedly untapped agricultural frontier land globally identified by FAO in 2000 was located in Latin America and Africa (GRAIN, 2020), where most large-scale land acquisitions have since occurred.

But recent decades also witnessed a resurgence of wider, more plural, debates on land governance and tenure policy, led by agrarian organisations, academia, and progressive governments. This was evidenced by FAO's International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) hosted by Brazil in 2006, followed by the 2012 adoption of the VGGT at the FAO-housed CFS. Both ICARRD and VGGT processes involved active participation of AOs, including COPROFAM and ROPPA.

Yet everyday decisions on land policy remain tied to interlocking territorial dynamics, between local, national, and regional levels of political authority. RAO members in South America (SA) and West Africa (WA) have engaged with state representatives at these three contiguous territorial scales to advance proposals for land tenure policy, offering a wider palette of options than the prevailing market-led orthodoxy. Despite differing patterns of land occupation and use between and within the two studied regions, both share common challenges related to contemporary forms of 'permanent primitive accumulation' on a world scale (Amin, 2011a).

Immediate responses involved much resistance and offensives at territorial level, as evidenced by land occupations enabling redistributive agrarian reform (SA), and campaigns resisting, halting or annulling large-scale land acquisitions (WA). However, less attention has

been paid to regional initiatives aimed at land policy issues to build united fronts against land concentration and commodification, propose and negotiate alternative land policy conceptions, and disseminate these into official norms and laws.

This chapter assesses regional land policy initiatives led by COPROFAM and ROPPA in their respective regions, along three parallel policy tracks spanning the 1990s-2010s, grouped here according to thematic sub-policy field, but presented in chronological order in each examined regional case: i) alternative *regional policy frameworks* and norms aimed at counteracting foreign or domestic driven land concentration processes (subsections 5.1.2 and 5.2.1); ii) intra-regional debates and policy diffusion processes aimed at keeping titled lands within *non-privatised collective land tenure* regimes (subsections 5.1.3 and 5.2.2); iii) *territorially-rooted participatory forms* of enforcing state regulation on land distribution and transfer (subsections 5.1.1 and 5.2.3).

5.1 COPROFAM's regional drive for equitable land distribution and tenure reform

This section examines three crucial and inter-related issues on which REAF's Thematic Group on Access to Land and Agrarian Reform (Land TG) has focused since the creation of the regional invited space in 2004: i) struggles for redistributive land reform, and their relationship to REAF debates on the social function of land property (section 5.1.1); ii) legal caps on foreign acquisition of land in MERCOSUR countries, partly stemming from REAF studies and deliberations (section 5.1.2); iii) securing existing land tenure rights as per REAF debates on titling to preserve land reform settlements or recognise indigenous/traditional communities' territories (section 5.1.3).

5.1.1 Upholding the social function of property to redistribute rural land

This first subsection examines how regional discussions in REAF's Land TG reclaimed the historically buried legal concept of the social function of land property (SFLP) (see chapter 3). It evaluates how this 20th century foundational notion for SA land redistribution contributed to cement discussions between COPROFAM national-level members in Southern Cone countries in

the first years of REAF/MERCOSUR in the mid-to-late 2000s. It then shows how SFLP was predominantly interpreted in land settlement disputes through a productivist lens inherited from previous generations of land struggles, and that land occupations combined with an upholding of the legally enshrined social function principle enabled the largest redistributive gains to occur in parts of the Southern Cone (mostly in Brazil's North and Northeast) peaking in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Lastly, it shows how agribusiness lobbies and neoliberal government administrations countered this redistributive wave by promoting the WB-led market-based land reform model, which – coupled with the 2000s commodity boom-fuelled land price increases and post-2008 land acquisition rush – halted land redistribution by the early 2010s. REAF deliberations after the post-2008 global land rush eventually prioritised a more international and multiscale lens to resist land concentration, as discussed in the following section (5.1.2).

Access to land for family farmers has been a regional policy deliberation priority between COPROFAM, other AOs, and Southern Cone governments since the creation of REAF/MERCOSUR, as stated in the invited space's internal regiment (2004) (França, 2016). A first contribution of regional discussions was a joint draft declaration proposal steered by the Uruguayan rotating presidency at the 4th REAF meeting in November 2005. It was distributed to MERCOSUR national delegations at FAO's ICARRD in 2006. Though not formally endorsed, it enabled REAF to bring land issues to regional policy debate with numerous AOs. The 'REAF Declaration on Land Reform and Rural Development' evidenced common land policy areas to debate in the regional invited space thereafter. Its recommendations included: implementing land redistribution policies, legal instruments to avoid land concentration, territorial zoning policies, promoting tenure rights of indigenous and traditional peoples and communities, and comparing national land legislations (França, 2016; Niederle, 2016).

The regional influence of AOs increased with the creation of the Land TG, which first met at the 5th REAF in Buenos Aires, in June 2006. At the 6th REAF in Porto Alegre (November 2006), the first Meeting of the Network of Institutions Responsible for Land Tenure Policies, Agrarian Reform and Access to Land took place (França, 2016). Hence, prior to the 7th REAF in Asunción (May 2007), a seminar on Land Tenure Policies and Agrarian Reform in MERCOSUR discussed land policy issues around key concepts, including SFLP, key to redistributive land reform and 'integral

agrarian reform' (IAR) (see 5.1.3). This involved discussing access to land, *and* complementary policies supporting family farmer production and commercialisation on newly acquired or legally recognised land.

These deliberations were an essential starting point at initial REAF meetings for COPROFAM, other AOs and government officials. Participants learnt about neighbouring countries' policy frameworks and land governance experiences. Seminars and joint declarations strengthened mutual comprehension on difficulties in implementing redistributive land reform – of which there were only some concrete gains to speak of in Brazil (Niederle, 2016; França, 2016). REAF's Technical Secretary recalled:

We started with the social function of land [...] with revaluing land use in family farming for the production of food. We explored this relationship, including at the normative level: 'Where is there a mention of social function?' 'What does it mean?'¹⁸³

A historically rooted concept throughout Latin America (see chapter 3), SFLP has most recently been enshrined in the Constitutions of Brazil (1988) and Paraguay (1992). Hence, the latter's article 109 guarantees the "economic and social function of private property with the goal of making it accessible to all", while its article 116 "states the goal of eliminating unproductive *latifundia* through expropriation" (FIAN, 2008:13). But within the Southern Cone region, SFLP underpinned the largest relative advances in land distribution and access in Brazil.

In previous decades, CONTAG's demands for agrarian reform had built on calls to uphold SFLP, as per the 1964 *Land Statute*. Instituted by the incoming military dictatorship, the Land Statute was nevertheless a milestone for CONTAG-led land struggles. It indicated concessions to the effervescent agrarian movement, if only to diffuse tensions and attempt co-opting parts of it, while violently repressing its most militant elements. Hence CONTAG's "struggles were based on the argument that the 1964 Land Statute should be implemented, reinforcing an 'institutional' means of social pressure" (Sauer and Perdigão, 2019:78). A veteran leader recalled:

The [local government official] would say 'communists!' [but we would reply] 'no this was done by [military general] Castelo Branco, look here'. We created the [land] conflicts, [claiming] the rights that were in the Land Statute. Many conflicts across Brazil were made from this. 'Let us claim – when there is a lawyer – let us demand enforcement of the Land Statute.'¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Interview CS-SA25.

¹⁸⁴ Interview AO-SA6.

The military government hardly redistributed land, and focused on colonisation schemes in frontier zones, particularly in the Amazon region. But the 1985 First National Plan for Agrarian Reform drawn by Brazil's transitional civilian government did take "the Land Statute's reformist potential to its ultimate consequences" whereby expropriation based on non-conformity of a landholding with SFLP became the "main agrarian reform instrument" (Guimarães and Medeiros, 1997:11). Contrasting CONTAG's legalistic stance, the MST and CUT's rural department in the 1980s led occupations of lands not fulfilling SFLP forcing the state to expropriate them. The most successful cases were nonetheless legally enabled by a constitutionally enshrined SFLP (Guimarães and Medeiros, 1997). The combination of MST-pioneered direct action (later followed by CONTAG) backed by legal recourse to SFLP formed the essence of redistributive land reform in Brazil during the following two decades (1990s-2000s) (see Guimarães and Medeiros, 1997).

This became possible because the social function criteria included a productivity index, making idle land usually kept for speculative purposes eligible for expropriation and redistribution.¹⁸⁵ CONTAG was a latecomer to the occupation tactic, but increasingly adopted it from the mid-1990s), pushed by its social bases, particularly in the North and Northeast, where the MST often had a smaller presence than in its stronghold in the country's South.¹⁸⁶ At national level, CONTAG became the second most active organisation struggling for agrarian reform. Hence, "from 2000 to 2012, CONTAG led 510 land struggles involving more than 53,000 families, in comparison to the 2701 settlements involving more than 450,000 families led by the MST" (Welch and Sauer, 2015:1125). It also joined the National Forum for Agrarian Reform and Justice in the Countryside (FNRA) founded in 1995, which congregated MST and CUT among 40-plus organisations.

A total of 23.9 million ha were redistributed to 575.000 families during the 1990s-2000s (Silveira et al., 2016). From the mid-2000s, land redistribution slowed down, ending by the early

¹⁸⁵ While SFLP in Brazil also encompasses criteria related to labouring conditions and environmental conservation, in practice the degree of idleness versus productivity of rural land has been the only line of argument to legally enable significant redistribution of land to occur through expropriation. Yet outdated low productivity indexes meant that even largely idle plots of land were in many cases not deemed eligible for redistribution.

¹⁸⁶ Interviews CS-SA26 and CS-SA14.

2010s. A similar pattern is perceptible in neighbouring Paraguay during the same timeframe and with similar factors accounting for the rise and fall of redistributive agrarian reform.

Indeed, the 1990s were the only decade in Paraguay's history that saw some degree of land redistribution. As revealed by the 2002 agricultural census, the number of "land plots from 5 to 10 ha and from 10 to 20 ha increased considerably" (Riquelme and Kretschmer, 2016:17), with more than 20.000 families accessing land through new settlements. One of COPROFAM's coordinators, from ONAC, elucidated how the limited land redistribution of Paraguay resulted, like in Brazil, from bottom-up pressure through land occupations legally backed by SFLP:

I am from the Department of Amambay, in the District of Bella Vista [...], a land expropriated through a struggle that occurred in 1994-1995 [...] from an Argentine citizen, [who had] an extension of more than 500.000 hectares. [...]. Half of this was done for agrarian reform. Sadly, we have had many land struggles in Paraguay. [...] Among these we have had many achievements, thousands of peasant families have been settled. But everything has been through struggle. It was not given away for free. It was a fight – there were human casualties, imprisonments. [...] All of the peasant settlements in Paraguay were [obtained] through occupations [...]. None were given by the government. They were obtained in occupations of unproductive lands which were in the hands of foreigners who were not eligible for agrarian reform.¹⁸⁷

However, redistribution in Paraguay soon dwindled following increasingly systematic criminalisation and repression of peasant organisations, and a rise in land prices due to monocrop agribusiness expansion, itself fuelled by rising commodity prices (Riquelme and Kretschmer, 2016). Reasons for waning redistributive agrarian reform in Brazil are similarly manifold. Most salient is the government's criminalisation of occupations and concomitant prohibition of Brazil's National Institute for Colonisation and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) to "evaluate the agrarian reform expropriation suitability of land that had been occupied" (Welch and Sauer, 2015:1127) from 1997 onwards, thus breaking the main mechanism of SFLP-based land redistribution.

Yet two other significant factors came into play. The first one relates to the rise in the real value of agrarian debt bonds¹⁸⁸ paid as delayed compensation to expropriated landowners¹⁸⁹, as well as to increases in market valuation of land from the 2000s. The latter was due not just to the

¹⁸⁷ Interview AO-SA8.

¹⁸⁸ *Títulos da dívida agrária* (TDA).

¹⁸⁹ These were usually redeemable only 10 years after expropriation, as a penalisation for not following SFLP principles, and to provide the state with enough fiscal capacity to purchase land at scale by deferring financial compensation (see below). Yet the bonds became increasingly tradeable on financial markets by the late 1990s as a result of government-mediated deregulation. Hence, TDAs eventually "became converted into a very liquid currency [that was] tradeable [before the 10 year expiration, thereby] increasing the federal government's agrarian debt" and eliminating the fiscal space previously enabled by delayed compensation (Pereira, 2015:401).

commodity boom (i.e. rising foreign demand fuelling domestic investment): land price increases also resulted from the valuation of agrarian debt bonds (after currency stabilisation in the mid-1990s), and their trade on the stock market. This made land redistribution policy require much higher fiscal resources per hectare¹⁹⁰ (see section 5.1.2) by the mid-2000s than it did in the 1990s.

The second factor relates to the parallel and sometimes competing promotion of alternative forms of access to land, such as land regularisation and titling (especially of informal settlements in the Legal Amazon region), recognition of lands traditionally occupied by indigenous and Afro-descendent rural communities, land purchased by the state for redistribution, subsidised credit for land acquisition, and allocation of public lands for settlements¹⁹¹ (Del Grossi and Marques, 2016; Lipton, 2009). Additionally, priority shifted towards a more general need to developing settlements from redistributed land to make good on the promise of 'integral agrarian reform' in the face of competing land concentration pressures (see section 5.1.3).

The crisis of South American agriculture concomitant to the debt crisis and neoliberal structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s coincided with the rise of a united front of agrarian movements pushing for the redistribution of land. Occupations of idle or unproductive land legally underpinned by SFLP enabled the greatest land redistribution gains ever achieved¹⁹² in countries with some of the world's most unequal land distribution patterns. However, by the time progressive administrations were in power in all four MERCOSUR founding countries after the election of Paraguay's president Lugo in 2008, the redistribution process paradoxically had all but run out of steam and most land settlements in Brazil's agrarian reform process emanated from land regularisation in the Amazon region, as opposed to expropriation and redistribution (Silveira et al., 2016).

¹⁹⁰ Interviews CS-SA24, CS-SA15, CS-SA23.

¹⁹¹ According to this wider definition of agrarian reform, which includes not only land redistribution but all forms of securing access to land for peasant family farmers, the 2003-2014 period saw the highest gains. Hence "as of April 2015, there were 969,129 settled families in 9,623 land reform projects comprising a total area of 88 million hectares – about 10 per cent of the Brazilian territory" (Del Grossi and Marques, 2016:13).

¹⁹² Although they represent only a small fraction of the land potentially eligible for redistribution according to SFLP in both Brazil and Paraguay, the absolute numbers of settled families and hectares of land are nonetheless significant.

In a regional context of decades-long unrelenting pressure on small and medium family farmers (with many farms disappearing via accelerated property concentration and land consolidation), reclaiming the historical concept of SFLP helped RAOs join forces, and reinstate the hitherto delegitimised objective of redistributive agrarian reform to serious policy debate with government. The significant drive to redistribute land in Brazil (as well as the modest gains made by Paraguay) during the late 1990s and early 2000s, served as concrete evidence of the SFLP concept's force for MERCOSUR countries that have yet to experience relevant amounts of land redistribution. Yet the receding pace and eventual stagnation of agrarian reform in the Southern Cone at the time REAF began its most productive phase (2006-2014) shows how SFLP was as much an 'offensive' concept to accelerate land redistribution for peasantries in semi-arid or tropical areas, than a 'defensive' one, where SFLP serves to emphasize the wider societal benefits of small and medium landed property in order halt land loss, particularly in temperate or subtropical regions¹⁹³.

Indeed, the greater prevalence of expropriated and redistributed land in Brazil's North and Northeast versus the higher proportion of land acquired through subsidised credit in its South is mirrored by neighbouring countries with agrarian formations comparable to Brazil's different macro-regions. Brazilian Northeast is characterised by prevalence of *minifundios* analogous to Paraguay's Oriental region. In both cases, land occupations have been undertaken with some successful redistribution.

However, Brazil's South bears more similarities with Argentine and Uruguayan cases, where COPROFAM's bases include a large contingent of propertied middle family farmers. Their most pressing concerns are usually avoiding debt insolvency and consequent loss of land or of their occupation as a producer¹⁹⁴, as well as ensuring there is enough land for the new generations (i.e. farm succession). Rarely do they feel compelled to struggle for new lands through occupations. Differently from MST, CUT, and FETRAF (later CONTRAF) in Brazil's three southern states,¹⁹⁵ CONTAG's southern federations have a significant medium farmer base with

¹⁹³ E.g. as argued by prominent FAA members on different occasions (see Prunotto, 1984).

¹⁹⁴ E.g. through financially coerced leasing of one's land to larger monocrop producers, a common sight in Argentina's Pampa region. Interview AO-SA-3.

¹⁹⁵ Particularly their western border areas, where Liberation Theology was most diffused. Interview AR-SA1.

usually more conservative political leanings than their counterpart federations in the Northeast. Particularly, their defence of small and medium private property (e.g. versus the MST's defence of forms of collective ownership) approximates CONTAG's southern federations with FAA and CNFR. Hence, all three share an approach to land access via purchasing mechanisms.

Although these mechanisms involve land markets, they have only significantly benefitted these AOs' bases insofar as they were considerably subsidised by the state. Hence, many southern CONTAG members prioritised a recourse to state-subsidised and regulated mechanisms to purchase land for small and medium producers. Similarly CNFR members in Uruguay have obtained some land via its National Colonisation Institute's (INC) land purchase schemes funded via progressive taxation. Yet, while the land acquired by INC during 2005-2014 benefited about 1.400 families, close to 12.000 family farmers (with less than 100 ha) lost their lands in a similar period (2000-2011)¹⁹⁶ (Díaz, 2014).

Hence, SFLP was much less effective at preserving family farms from disappearing through the rapid advance of large-scale agribusiness throughout the Southern Cone, than at justifying expropriation for at least some land redistribution in parts of it. As fiscal limits to further implement the latter manifested by the late 2000s, financialised acceleration of the global land rush revealed how drivers of land concentration and small farms' disappearance were to a significant extent international, and – as all too evident to Paraguayans and Uruguayans vis-à-vis their two larger neighbours – regional. We now turn to this international dimension of SA land concentration, and the land policy solutions debated in REAF to tackle it.

5.1.2 Approving legal limits to the concentration and foreign acquisition of land

South American AOs' influence on land policy from a regional perspective reached their apex during discussions on concentration and foreign alienation (*extranjerización*) of land in the late 2000s. Subsequent changes in national legislations approved in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay confirmed REAF's influence as regional policy space (Niederle, 2016).

¹⁹⁶ Out of INC's 576.000 hectares of total public land allotted to 5.000 families purchased by INC (1948-2014), 81.000 were acquired in the 2005-2014 period and distributed to 1.400 families (Díaz, 2014).

At the 8th REAF (Montevideo, October 2007), delegations noted that family farmers were undermined by land concentration driven by acquisitions from actors of "their own countries, [but also] from the region or outside of it" (França, 2016:22). Accordingly, reports were commissioned by the four MERCOSUR founding countries and presented at the 10th REAF (Rio de Janeiro, November 2008), where delegations decided to send an evidence-based recommendation to MERCOSUR's Common Market Group (GMC).

The decision to send a draft recommendation to the GMC on 'Tenure Policies and Access to Land' was acted upon at the 12th REAF (Montevideo, December 2009). Though approved by the GMC, which forwarded the recommendation to the Common Market Council (CMC), MERCOSUR's highest instance, the CMC rejected the proposal. This is the only REAF recommendation or decision that was not approved by MERCOSUR's governing body since the creation of the regional specialised meeting in 2004. Although reasons for the rejection were never made explicit, the most probable hypothesis put forward by observers points to the fact that many of the 'foreign acquisitions' came from other MERCOSUR countries, particularly Brazilian and Argentine capital acquiring lands in Paraguay and Uruguay respectively (Niederle, 2016).

Increasing land prices in Brazil and Argentina drove an expansion towards land purchase and consolidation of agricultural commodity chain operations in Uruguay. The trans-border territory formed by Brazil's Mato Grosso do Sul and Paraná states with Paraguay's eastern Departments bears continuity with successive generations of Brazilian agricultural interests in Paraguay. This dates back at least to Paraguayan military ruler Alfredo Stroessner's policies which encouraged Brazilian migration and investment since the 1960s along the country's eastern departments (see chapter 3), and indeed to lands acquired as a result of the 1870s Triple Alliance War pitting Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay against Paraguay.

As shown in Figure 11 below, in some of Paraguay's eastern departments, such as Canindeyú (60,1 %) and Alto Paraná (55,2 %), Brazilians hold more land titles than Paraguayans (Castilho, Bassi, 2017). The eastern departments also concentrate the sites where Stroessner's government promoted peasant family farmer colonisation in the early 1960s (see chapter 3). Adding to an already explosive mix, the Itaipú dam construction on the Paraguayan-Brazilian

border in the late 1970s displaced numerous Brazilian peasant family farmers, who settled along both sides of Paraguay's borderline. The massacres of Ñacunday and Curuguaty in 2012 (the latter of which was used by the opposition as a pretext to impeach President Lugo) were only the latest in a series of land conflicts involving predominantly Brazilian (first- or second-generation migrant) agribusiness and Paraguayan peasants.



Figure 11: *Proportion of land titles held by Brazilian nationals in Paraguay's eastern Departments*¹⁹⁷ (Source: Castilho, Bassi, 2017).

However, despite intra-MERCOSUR reasons for rejecting REAF's recommendation, links between regionally articulated agribusiness and *global* transnational networks equally underscored the *extranjerización* discourse employed in the draft recommendation text. Global soya bean expansion was a clear driver of land concentration across MERCOSUR in recent decades, indirectly fuelled by growing export markets in Asia (particularly China) and Europe. MERCOSUR's increase in soya production was so great that its four founding member countries plus Bolivia now represent two thirds of global soya bean exports, a position hitherto held by the

¹⁹⁷ Text in upper right hand corner: '14.2% of Paraguay's land titles belong to Brazilians'.

US in the 1990s, with a significant portion of the economic surplus retained by input-supplying global agri-food conglomerates (see Figure 12 below).



Figure 12: Syngenta publicity emphasising the 'transborder agrarian territory' covered by soya expansion since the 1970s in the Southern Cone.¹⁹⁸ (Source: Wesz, 2014).

Despite the CMC's rejection, debates leading up to the country studies, seminars, regional synthesis and joint recommendation between delegations was fruitful in enabling participants to incorporate regional lessons into national legislations. Though Brazil and Uruguay only slightly altered their legal frameworks regarding foreign acquisition of rural land, the debate reached most public exposure in Argentina. As recalled by a civil servant of Argentina's Ministry of Agriculture:

Argentina approved an anti-*extranjerización* law. [...] Land was concentrated, often in the hands of foreigners, a significant part of the land. [The] agribusiness [sector] was completely against the law. They thought this would discourage investment. I mean the most powerful of the [Argentine agribusiness actors] - they are partners [of transnational capital]. There are not many of them.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Right side headline: 'Soya knows no borders. Neither does Centinela's information'. Left side map: 'United Republic of Soya', encompassing the four MERCOSUR founding member countries plus Bolivia.

¹⁹⁹ Interview CS-SA27.

Argentina's Senate approved Law 29.737 - which places limits on foreign acquisition of land - almost unanimously in 2011. It determined that up to 15% of Argentine land could be held by foreign capital and instituted a 1.000 hectare limit on any landholding held by a foreign citizen or business. COPROFAM's FAA had attempted to introduce similar legislation on previous occasions (see Figure 13 below).



Figure 13: FAA poster promoting public debate on the foreign acquisition and concentration of Argentine land²⁰⁰

However, the 2011 Land Bill allowed for a potential revision of the 1.000-hectare limit which occurred under President Macri in 2016 through Decree 820/16. This led FAA's President Omar Príncipe to publicly question "which interests are behind this decree, that encroaches upon small producers?" (Corrientes Hoy, 2016:2). FAA's Union Secretary Orlando Marino added that, one week before the bicentennial independence celebrations, "the worst homage we [could] pay to our heroes is to give away our natural resources and favour [land] concentration" (*Ibid*).

Macri's administration's lifting of restrictions aimed to encourage foreign investment in agriculture, including in the country's most productive 'nucleus zone' (*zona núcleo*) (north of Buenos Aires province, and south of Córdoba and Santa Fe provinces). Significant parts of this zone have strong FAA representation, hence the resistance displayed by its leaders in the face of

²⁰⁰ Text: 'Natural Resources. Land: For Whom [?], What For [?]. Foreign Acquisition and Concentration of Land'.

the 2016 presidential decree. The lifting of the 1.000 hectare limit that had been instituted by the 2011 bill is the main point of contention denounced by FAA. This is revelatory of the dense network of small and even medium farmers (by South American land size standards) from a prosperous agro-exporting region that would be negatively affected by the measure (InfoSur, 2016).

Yet Macri's administration did not overturn all of the bill's provisions. Under Kirchner's administration, the need for a national cadastre of agricultural landholding to identify owners, including potential law-breaking foreign owners, contributed to trigger a land registration and titling process. This was later reconfigured into a land-titling programme,²⁰¹ which relates to discussions in the following subsection below.

5.1.3 Securing redistributed, indigenous, and traditional lands through non-privatised titling

Cooperation programmes between MERCOSUR countries resulting from the network of national land institutes created as part of REAF's Land TG involved exchanging formulation and implementation experiences. For instance, a cooperation agreement between Paraguay's INDERT and Brazil's INCRA aimed to share Brazil's agrarian reform beneficiary registration methodology with their Paraguayan counterparts (França, 2016). Avoiding land (re)-concentration became increasingly seen as the other side of the coin to redistributing land, since both concur towards the same goal of securing land tenure for family farmers.

Regarding exchanges between the national land institutes to build policy implementation capacity, REAF's longtime Technical Secretary Lautaro Viscay, an Argentine agronomist with in-depth knowledge of Southern Cone agrarian policies, recalled: "there was always the titling question in the middle".²⁰² This was partly because international donors, who had a non-negligible influence on agricultural policy budgetary allocation (particularly in smaller countries), favoured land titling, for reasons further explored below, particularly in the West African section

²⁰¹ Interview CS-SA27.

²⁰² Interview CS-SA28.

(5.2) of this chapter. But it also reflected indigenous and traditional peoples' demands for titling, including Brazil's Afro-descendent *quilombolas*.²⁰³

Indigenous and traditional peoples demanded formalising collective possession throughout SA, given that recognition as state-protected land under non-privatised tenure regimes was perceived as a fundamental way to prevent further land alienation and concentration. For instance, Brazil's legislation confers permanent public status to officially registered indigenous and *quilombola* territories (respectively 13,3% and 0.11% of Brazil's territory), which, differently from agrarian reform settlement lands, cannot be resold. This explains Brazilian AOs' longstanding demand that settlements also be included as permanently public lands not to be resold on the private market.²⁰⁴

In parallel, COPROFAM began to call for 'integral agrarian reform' (IAR), a discursive policy frame which encompassed both access to land and policies to maintain it. Thus it reflected COPROFAM members' diverse class and territorial objective interests: whether these were principally focused on the redistribution process to obtain land or on safeguarding it, as their possession of it became increasingly threatened by monocrop or cattle-ranch driven land concentration (2000s-2010s):

COPROFAM and its affiliated organisations will continue to exercise their right to defend family, peasant, and indigenous production [...]. For this they shall continue proposing specific public policies to promote integral agrarian reform and secure access to land, production, commercialisation and access to markets, and public procurement, among other indispensable measures to guarantee rooting and sustainable development to improve the lives of family, peasant, and indigenous farmers. (COPROFAM, 2007: 6-7).

For the regional network of AOs, civil servants, and academics working together in REAF's Land TG, the shared discursive policy frame of IAR served to orient discussions on at least two dimensions of land tenure security (looked at in the remainder of this section): i) developing land reform settlements through a comprehensive set of public policies; and ii) legally recognising indigenous and traditional collectively held territories²⁰⁵.

²⁰³ Brazilian autonomous Afro-descendent traditional rural communities formed by former plantation slave labourers that remained active after slavery was abolished in 1888. Analogous rural communities exist in former plantation colonies across Latin America and the Caribbean, with different local names (e.g. *palenque* in Colombia *cumbe* in Venezuela, *maroons* in the Guyanas and English-speaking Caribbean).

²⁰⁴ Participant observation in 27th REAF Land TG, Florianópolis, 2017.

²⁰⁵ Interview CS-SA23.

Brazil's First National Plan for Agrarian Reform (PNRA, 1985) had placed most of its emphasis on land redistribution and the legal backing to ensure the expropriation process that preceded it. The Second PNRA (2004) instead focused on developing land reform settlements, given that only a fraction of redistributed land was receiving adequate access to support policies that would enable these to be economically and socially viable, and thus avoid reversal of land redistribution through reselling of reformed land²⁰⁶.

Indeed, one of the key challenges of agrarian reform policy is maintaining settled land in the hands of family farmers. Part of the critics of Brazilian land reform since the 1990s related to the state's incapacity to provide policy support - including the most basic services - to settled families. With no access to electricity or running water, let alone support for farming activities, a substantial part of these families consequently had no other option but to leave the settlements.²⁰⁷ These challenges severely affected Paraguay's land reform areas. A REAF participant from Paraguay's ONAC and COPROFAM explains:

The majority of those who abandoned their lands did not do so because they wanted to. [It is] because something happened, or [because] they were threatened. And here there is no oversight, no control, there are no public policies, these are not implemented. In other words, they basically give you a piece of land and they abandon you. And you have to make ends meet by yourself. And it's very difficult. [...] They send your son to a faraway school, [to live] in another house, in other places. [...] Today, I think only about 20% [of agrarian reform lands] are occupied by family farming. [...] In the zone of Alto Paraná - one of the most productive regions of Paraguay's Oriental region - there are thousands of hectares that are INDERT lands which are occupied by soya bean growers, for kilometres on end... that [INDERT] is not capable of taking back, that are not titled.²⁰⁸

REAF Land TG discussions on IAR were also about connecting access to land with access to agricultural policies – similarly to Brazil's Second PNRA. Former Minister of Agrarian Development Miguel Rossetto clarified:

The pillars of the Second National Agrarian Reform Plan [relate to] the fundamental idea that [access to] land begins a process [...] of agrarian reform - it doesn't finish it. So the reformed space must be a space of quality of production, quality of life. This oriented a whole debate on productive qualification, credit, financing [...]. Involving these reformed areas with the territories meant qualifying these reformed areas, with electric energy, and so forth. [...] There was a huge demand that we inherited, there was a brutal velocity of settlements, [a need to] satisfy a very big social demand.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Interview CS-SA26.

²⁰⁷ Interviews CS-SA15 and CS-SA23.

²⁰⁸ Interview AO-SA8.

²⁰⁹ Interview CS-SA26

Under Brazil's legislation, lands obtained through INCRA's agrarian reform mechanisms (e.g. expropriation with delayed compensation, or legal recognition/titling of informal land possession as individual family farms) cannot be resold for a period determined by law. Yet differently from indigenous and *quilombola* lands, reformed lands are less protected from re-concentration. Indeed, the period during which redistributed or titled land cannot be resold on the private land market was reduced by a 2017 presidential decree from 10 to 3 years.²¹⁰ This mechanism, combined with drastically lower state support for family farms and a severe post-2014 economic crisis, pressured family farmers to sell their plots and thus reverse agrarian reform gains. Hence, Brazil's 2017 agricultural census revealed that about 100.000 farms had disappeared since the previous census undertaken in 2006. Compounded by legislation that relaxed limits for foreign acquisition of land (see section 5.1.2), Brazil's agrarian reform gains have come under unprecedented strain.

A meeting of REAF's Land TG (which I attended as part of my fieldwork in 2017) enabled to evidence, by contrast with the above-described Brazilian conjuncture, how reformed land need not be subject to unfettered market forces and pit actors of radically different size and political-economic weight against each other. A high-level representative from Uruguay's INC raised the significant point to the attention of Land TG participants that any land previously obtained by INC (generally through purchase, financed by national taxes, including on land) remains in the hands of the Uruguayan state, managed by INC, turning beneficiaries into rural 'state tenants' of sorts. Hence, should some family farmers be driven (whether by choice or necessity) to sell, INC's legal attributions maintain that land public and attribute it to other beneficiaries.

This also explains why the maintenance of INC as a public agency was so vehemently defended when its privatisation was attempted, from the military dictatorship in the 1970s through to 1980s-early 2000s neoliberal democratically-elected governments. Indeed, INC's privatisation was resisted through mobilisation by organisations including CNFR and main urban labour union PIT-CNT (López, 2008) (see chapter 3).

²¹⁰ Interview CS-SA15/CS-SA23.

Yet INC's representative in REAF's 2017 Land TG highlighted the permanence of reformed lands as a collective Uruguayan public heritage managed by the state as part of a debate involving claims by indigenous peoples of neighbouring country delegations. Indeed, titling was back on the agenda under Argentine and Brazilian neoliberal restoration attempts post mid-2010s, but previously accumulated gains were still sufficiently entrenched to enable rational collective debate in the regional invited space of REAF. Moreover, the participatory nature of debates revealed fertile complementarities between the preoccupations and policy prescriptions voiced by South American indigenous and traditional community representatives, and those of progressive government civil servants still in office at the time (e.g. Uruguay, Chile).

During president Bachelet's second mandate (2014-2018), Chile's INDAP²¹¹ was grappling with indigenous uprisings centred in its Araucanía region, many of them involving land conflicts²¹². This mirrored indigenous movements' rise to prominence in agrarian policy debates in neighbouring Argentina under president Cristina Kirchner's second mandate (2011-2015) (see chapter 7). Hence, in June 2017, at the 26th REAF regional meeting hosted by Chile²¹³, fittingly held to commemorate 50 years of the beginning of Chile's Agrarian Reform (1967-1973), an indigenous representative reminded audience members that Chile's indigenous population had hardly benefited from that historical process, however progressive it may have been at its time²¹⁴ (see chapter 3). Argentine and Chilean indigenous groups have pressured for a recognition of indigenous territories, in similar ways as Brazilian traditional peoples and communities were able to obtain formal (though often threatened) recognition with its 1988 Constitution, or, more recently, inspired by recognition of indigenous lands in Bolivia during the Evo Morales administrations (2006-2019).

The risks to land loss for these and other peasant family farmers across the region have remained acute as the unrelenting drive for 'permanent primitive accumulation' in the global

²¹¹ *Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario* (Agricultural Development Institute). Created in 1962, INDAP had a central role in implementing Chile's agrarian reform (1967-1973). Although threatened with disappearance by the Pinochet regime, INDAP survived into the country's (post-1989) democratic transition (Faiguenbaum, 2017). It is Chile's key government institution responsible for policies targeted at peasant and indigenous family farmers (PIFFs).

²¹² Interview CS-SA10.

²¹³ An anomaly given that Chile is not a MERCOSUR permanent member, yet had a government willing to finance such an endeavour, differently from Brazil and Argentina at the height of late 2010s neoliberal restoration.

²¹⁴ Interview CS-SA23.

peripheries persists. Despite some gains made in the 1990s and 2000s, rural lands held by South American indigenous/traditional communities and other peasant family farmers still represent a *minority* of the region's rural territories. Meanwhile a *majority* of West Africa's rural land is still held by peasant family farmers under different forms of tenure. Yet this other region of the Global South is no less strained by different forms of surplus extraction putting pressure on peasant family farms and collective land tenure systems. ROPPA has aimed to address these pressing issues in its multipronged efforts to influence land policy, which shall be looked at in the following section of this chapter.

5.2 ROPPA's regional drive to secure and maintain distributed access to rural land

This section looks at ROPPA's tackling of land policy issues in West Africa through three inter-related strategies. The first subsection (5.2.1) looks at ROPPA's alternative proposals to face the challenges of land grabbing and tenure fragmentation through regional efforts to widen land policy debates beyond the narrow titling-privatising orthodoxy. The second subsection (5.2.2) looks at how obstacles to mainstreaming local land policy principles via regional integration have been partly overcome through ROPPA's network of national platforms and its diffusion of land laws that strengthen collective tenure regimes across West African countries. The challenges of reforming previous land laws or implementing new ones whilst resisting land concentration pressures are all related to the need for greater participatory land tenure governance, as encouraged or coordinated by ROPPA members at local and national scales. This is examined through the particular case of Senegal's national land policy process and CNCR's efforts to democratize local land tenure governance by strengthening village and inter-village commissions across the country's territory (5.2.3).

5.2.1 Regional land policy alternatives to privatised titling and land grabbing

5.2.1.1 External and internal factors of rising land concentration in West Africa

The pressures and financial incentives offered by the WB and other development agencies for governments in WA to privatise land in the 1990s gained traction as they ran in tandem with agrifood transnationals aiming to expand operations by acquiring land in the 2000s and 2010s. Hence "Between 2004 and 2009 the World Bank was committed to 34 land titling and registration projects worth US\$1 billion compared to just 3 projects in [the] 1990–1994 period" (Chimhowu, 2019:898). Yet registered lands in most African countries still represent an exception, as they are mostly "in urban areas and within irrigated projects, where returns to resources are sufficiently high for it to be worth establishing title" (IIED, 1999, ii). Hence, only "2 to 10% of rural lands are estimated to be officially registered" in Africa today (Chauveau, 2018:1).

Although Senegal's land tenure is still governed by its 1964 law, the country's efforts to update its land legislation over the last three decades serves to illustrate wider trends across WA. Indeed, following its WB-contracted 1995 Agricultural Structural Adjustment Plan (PASA), the government initially agreed to transition towards privatisation of its land tenure system. It commissioned an expert-drafted report on "enabling private investors to gain access to [Senegal's untitled land] and obtain a land title" (Faye, 2007:3). Yet the report ignored Senegal's most pressing land tenure issues, particularly the increasing fragmentation of landholdings due to demographic pressures and soil degradation.

Indeed, between Senegal's 1960 and 1998 agricultural censuses, "the average cultivated area per worker for all family farms [decreased] from 1.07 ha to 0.57 ha" (IPAR, 2007:7). Hence most of the country's rainfed "farms are not viable without significant animal husbandry and non-agricultural activities" (*Ibid*). The average size of a Senegalese farm is 5.5 ha, meaning "less than 1 ha per [family farmer] [...]. These ratios decrease from generation to generation with the fragmentation of land assets resulting from customary inheritance practices in traditional rural societies. Today, more than 2/3 of farms have less than 4 ha, hence 0.5 ha per working member of each family" (Faye, 2018:57-58).

This process of "miniaturisation of [...] small farms as population pressure creates a need to subdivide to accommodate more people" in parallel with a "rise in the number of medium scale farms" mostly managed by "urban based professionals and external investors" has become increasingly common across the African continent in the last few decades (Chimhowu, 2019:901-

902). Hence, the other side of the coin of landholding fragmentation has been the concentration of relatively larger plots into fewer hands. While 72,1% of Senegalese families had at least 6 ha of land in 2001-2002, by 2005-2006, this proportion had fallen to only 27,4% (Ndiaye, 2012:109). These minorities of relatively wealthier Senegalese farmers include religious *marabouts*, retired civil servants, tradesmen and carriers (IPAR, 2007).

Despite growing recognition by the WB of some strengths of customary tenure systems, it remains committed in compelling countries to modify their land tenure laws to offer "secure and unambiguous property rights" to "allow markets to transfer land to more productive uses and users" (World Bank, 2007, cited by Chimhowu, 2019:898). A significant part of the "people taking advantage of national titling programme[s] are urban based professionals seeking to invest in rural land" (Chimhowu, 2019:901-902) referred to by CNCR/ROPPA's Sidy Ba (2018:9-10) as a "new aristocracy and new type of producers, [dubbed] 'Sunday peasants'". As a former high-level civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture put it: "people have to stop simply wak[ing] up [one day and say] 'I'm a farmer', anyone wakes up [and suddenly decides] 'I'm a herder'. No, you are a novice herder, you do not even know what animal husbandry is. So we must be serious".²¹⁵

This has manifested through a "displacement of poor people from their land through distress sales [and/or] simple land grabbing by local elites working with state officials or investors especially in jurisdictions where customary tenure still does not offer statutory protection" (Chimhowu, 2019:901-902). ROPPA's former Executive Secretary, Mamadou Goita (2012:17), thus defined the RAO's understanding of *land grabbing* to encompass not just foreign or larger-scale land acquisitions but land transactions of all sizes, performed by actors foreign or national:

For ROPPA, land grabbing is a much broader concept [than large-scale land purchase or long-term lease]. It refers to any kind of land transfer (concession, sale, rent, loan) to a national or foreign operator who has an influence on the land tenure security of family farms, whatever their size. [...] Size is not a fundamental criterion: a 5 ha land grab in Guinea-Bissau, the Gambia or Benin, countries where agricultural land availability is very scarce, and where population is very dense, can create severe damage.

Though difficult to ascertain given the secrecy involving most of these land transactions, as of 2009, approximately 400.000 ha had been earmarked for large-scale land acquisitions in Senegal, out of the country's 3.800.000 ha of agricultural land (Oya and Ba, 2013). Later studies

²¹⁵ Interview CS-WA5 and CS-WA7.

(Kanoute et al., 2011) identified at least 17 investment projects representing almost 660.000 ha, or 16,5 % of Senegal's agricultural land, out of which about two thirds were attributed to foreign acquisitions, and the remaining third to national ones. At the regional scale, the "participatory inventory of massive land acquisitions in West Africa" cited by ROPPA's Sidy Ba (2018) in his allocution at the World Forum on Access to Land (WFAL) in Valencia, Spain in 2016, identified 2.3 million ha acquired between 2000-2012 in 9 West African countries.

5.2.1.2 Regional Land Policy Initiatives

A variety of initiatives have aimed to create a policy framework for rural land governance at the West African regional level. Although these have mostly been incomplete policy processes, a resulting intensification of dialogue between West African member countries' AOs and their respective government authorities have enabled regional discussions on commonly faced challenges to influence national policies. Indeed, participatory national land commissions set up in WA to update national land legal frameworks in the 2000s and 2010s (see 5.2.1 and 5.2.3) were preceded by regional meetings initiated in the 1990s. Among these, a 1994 meeting in Praia, Cape Verde convened by CILSS was an important milestone on regional land policy discussions (Cissokho, 2009).

The 1994 CILSS and CSAO-sponsored conference on land tenure in the Sahel countries and its subsequent developments (commonly referred to as the 'Praia process'), not only had an initial bolstering role in the formation of ROPPA's network of national-level affiliated organisations, as seen in chapter 4. The CILSS 'Praia Declaration' also created the bases for a regional land governance policy process that emphasised civil society participation and support to member states in the elaboration of land laws (CSAO, 2006; UNECA, 2011). A 'Praia + 9 Forum' meeting on 'Rural Land and Sustainable Development in the Sahel and West Africa' held in Bamako, Mali in 2003 incorporated results of national consultations and proposed in its final declaration the creation of a 'Regional Land Tenure Charter in the Sahel and West Africa' (CSAO, 2006) to be approved by CILSS, UEMOA and ECOWAS member states. The charter would "constitute the basis for the development of common legislation on land tenure issues in the sub-

region, particularly in the framework of [UEMOA] and ECOWAS" (UNECA, 2011:45) and potentially serve as a "source of inspiration for national land reforms" (CSAO, 2006:16).

The Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa were a joint initiative launched in 2006 by the African Union Commission (AUC) in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (ADB).²¹⁶ The Land Policy Initiative (LPI), as it is otherwise known, aimed to review African land policies and develop a common framework to "strengthen land rights, enhance productivity, and secure livelihoods" in the continent (UNECA, 2011:xi). The resulting framework document was endorsed by the continental body's Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Land and Livestock in April 2009. It was shortly followed by the AU Heads of State and Government Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa issued at their 13th meeting in July 2009 in Sirte, Libya.

LPI implementation was to occur in partnership with African RECs, including ECOWAS. Yet this process was halted a few years later due to withdrawal of earmarked funds. Nevertheless, West African regional encounters involved consultations and policy dialogue with ROPPA, providing its member organisations with spaces to reflect, exchange, and strategize on national land policies. The AU's initiative established key principles, later cited in documents produced by national-level land commissions (see 5.2.2 and 5.2.3), including recognition of the legitimacy of "indigenous tenure systems" (CNRF, 2016:7). Although a land tenure charter - conceived as a long term regional policy document - has yet to be approved in WA, workshops and meeting discussions at ECOWAS level have benefited from participatory dialogue related to these initiatives (ECOWAS, 2010a). These include attempts to formulate a "regional framework for the elaboration and implementation of convergent land policies within ECOWAS" (CNRF, 2016:8) in accordance with the AU's LPI. Similarly, UEMOA's action plan approved in 2009 included provisions to create a Regional Land Observatory in West Africa (ORFAO).

The profusion of regional land policy initiatives at ECOWAS and UEMOA levels is strongly correlated with the height of the post-2008 global land rush and civil society mobilisations against significant increases in large-scale land acquisitions and concessions.²¹⁷ However, partly as a

²¹⁶ These three African continental-level institutions began collaborating closely and with a more strategic outlook in the 2000s and 2010s than in previous decades (see Dowbor, 2013).

²¹⁷ Interview AR-WA3.

result of AOs' frustration with the absence of substantial political thrust to follow through any of the above-mentioned regional policy processes, alternative initiatives have also been launched. One of these, the 'Global Convergence for Water, Land and Seeds – West Africa' which includes ROPPA, other AOs, and international civil society networks, has mobilised across different West African countries as part of efforts to reconnect RAOs' articulations with their local bases on land issues (see Figure 14 below). Yet in so doing it also aims to re-engage with official regional-level processes in order to reignite these and render them effective (Jacovetti and Koné, 2017).

Members of the Global Convergence have called for "real and existing participation and respect for their decisions at both national and sub-regional level such as the sub-regional declination (ECOWAS, UEMOA) of the African Union's 'Framework and Guiding Lines on Land Policy in Africa' (GRAIN, 2016:6). Echoing ECOWAS's official motto – 'From an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of Peoples' – the Convergence's 'Green Book' manifesto calls for an engagement of the "ECOWAS of Peoples to launch a regional policy process via a participatory memorandum for West Africa to live in stability and peace", including regulatory texts that would safeguard "communities' land rights, by respecting the fact that land, water, and natural resources are common goods and not commodities" (Convergence Globale, 2016:27).



Figure 14: *Demonstration against land grabbing greeting the Convergence's West African Caravan at Ourour (Senegal, Fatick region)* ²¹⁸ (Source: GRAIN, 2016).

Photo credit: Agence Mediaproduct.

²¹⁸ Texts on demonstration signs: 'The jatropa project has dispossessed Ourour lands', 'Stop land grabbing at Ourour', 'Access to land for women'.

Whether led by the AU, CILSS, UEMOA, or ECOWAS, or by AOs and NGOs outside of these, different initiatives have aimed to tackle West African land issues through a single comprehensive framework. ROPPA and other AOs' participation in these have contributed to a gradual convergence on principles, which have influenced national land policies, even if the initiatives' original purpose of arriving at a regional land framework has not as of yet been attained. Meanwhile, the relentless pressure for privatisation through state-allocated agricultural investments in strategic territorial enclaves (fertile lands and urban proximity) and through informal land markets (mostly petty and state-linked bourgeoisies) in West African countries have in many cases been slowed down or temporarily stalled, not least as a result of successful local mobilisation campaigns and peasant resistance at specific sites earmarked for private land grabs (Inter-Réseaux, 2011). Yet informal markets and demographic/environmental pressures continue to increase land concentration for a small privileged minority, while land fragmentation and soil degradation affects a growing proportion of West African peasantries.

Although functioning in practice as guarantors of stability and collective forms of land tenure, customary practices also produce their own forms of power imbalances and exclusions, particularly as a result of patriarchal governance systems that marginalize women and youth from decision-making, despite the crucial role of the latter two in ensuring the sustainability of peasant family farming. Thus, ROPPA members have supported reforming existing laws, not to advocate titling as a first step to privatisation, but rather to *prevent* full-blown privatisation and land concentration. They have also shown determination to push for land policies allowing all members of family farms - including women and youth to co-manage rural lands under different tenure arrangements, as shall be examined in the following subsection.

5.2.2 Safeguarding access to land through collective tenure regimes

A significant regional-wide trend with an impact on rural land issues across West Africa is the (long historical, but recently accentuated) southward migratory flow from semi-arid Sahel to the savannah and humid tropical coastal zones. The resulting higher human population and

livestock densities in the latter zones due primarily to lack of sufficient water or grazing areas in the former have put increased pressure on land use systems across the region. This is compounded by the fact that WA's southern tropical coastal region is also the site of export larger-scale plantations (rubber, timber, cocoa, coffee). Higher levels of capitalisation in these more densely populated plantation regions have yet to translate into significantly higher levels of formal tenure, but they did serve as a driver for past unsuccessful initiatives to step up land titling-privatising which led to significant land conflicts, sometimes collapsing into civil war (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire in the 2000s)²¹⁹. Whether due to relative economic strengths (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire's dynamic export-oriented economy) or weaknesses (e.g. Liberia or Sierra Leone's more dependent global insertion) coastal countries indeed succumbed most to the privatising-titling narrative in the 1990s and 2000s. Their savannah and Sahelian neighbours were generally more cautious, even more so after witnessing the risks of civil war associated to ruthless titling-privatisation of collectively owned and managed rural land in the above-cited coastal countries.

ROPPA's interventions in public demonstrations, media outlets, and invited spaces have contributed to opening up debates on land titling to a wider spectrum of possible policy options than that traditionally promoted by the WB and others. As ROPPA's Mamadou Goita (2012:18, emphasis added) puts it,

There are other forms of ensuring land tenure security which enable farmers to be serene on their land without having an *individual property* title. The [individual property] title is the royal path to concentrate land in the hands of a few operators, particularly banks which demand it as a guarantee. Indeed, if land is used as collateral to obtain a loan, given the interest rates charged on the market [which are] much higher than the profitability rate of family farms, producers will go bankrupt.

Whether its is followed by privatisation or not, titling is often a highly contested process, given the collective *and* informal nature of land tenure regimes in most of West Africa. This is perhaps most salient for such tenure systems as pastoralist transhumance corridors, river and lake fisheries, or forestry reserves whose collective management often clashes with area expansion of crop farming. But it also occurs in many cases where land is informally owned or

²¹⁹ High rates of land conflicts (a key factor in most African wars and protracted foci of instability) are often linked to competition over attribution of individual property rights, particularly among youth (e.g. to purportedly 'true' Ivorians versus discriminated Burkinan migrants in Côte d'Ivoire), and to collective resistance against land loss brought about by non-consensual titling-privatising.

leased by extended families, and can lead to tensions and conflicts when individuals within or outside these aim to capitalize on such plots of land without prior collective consultation.

ROPPA's network has enabled it to influence national land policy formulation and reform processes across the West African region. Regional policy patterns and dynamics have thus emerged, even in the absence of the Regional Land Charter previously proposed by CILSS, UEMOA and ECOWAS (see 5.2.1). The most striking elements of these features include the creation of: i) participatory land commissions, especially at the local (village or inter-village) level (see 5.2.3); ii) incentives for the coexistence of various tenure regimes inside a same country, to account for contrasting types of agricultural use and according to planned and negotiated zoning²²⁰; iii) different types of safeguards against indiscriminate purchase and sale of land (e.g. via progressive taxation). All three types of land policies (i.e. participatory commissions, mixed tenure regimes, land transaction regulations) are often inter-related and formulated so as to reinforce each other in some of the proposed national legislations, as shall be seen in the several West African country cases below (i.e. Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, Mali).

In several countries, ROPPA national platforms have found innovative forms of enabling provisions for land titling while simultaneously instituting safeguards to limit land sale or lease. For instance, Burkina Faso's 034/2009 Law, which was strongly influenced by ROPPA's CPF, created the new Rural Land Tenure Possession Certificate (APFR), which can be individual or collective. Collective APFR titles have the particularity of including, besides the name of the entrusted individual on the front side of the document, the names of all other family members on the obverse side of the land title form. The latter are also legally entitled to the formalised land plot.²²¹

²²⁰ Despite the existence of regional institutions and initiatives aimed at territorial management of shared natural resources and transborder flows (e.g. rivers, pastoralist transhumance, seasonal labour migration), regional policy processes have yet to provide adequate responses (Diallo, 2013). Territorial approaches to land governance have nevertheless begun to emerge within countries. For instance, Senegal's consultative policy process has emphasized the potential complementarities that can be built between mixed systems of land tenure within a single country (CNRF, 2016). Hence, titling related to agro-industrialisation projects or achieving economies of scale is not rejected *per se* by agrarian organisations: access to technologies and productivity are indeed sought, provided they occur in a justly distributed and ecologically sound manner across contiguous territories. Interview AO-WA-11.

²²¹ Interviews AO-WA15 and AR-WA3.

Not only does this foster better adequacy between legislation and the extended family type of informal land tenure regimes and family farming systems of WA, it also places significant limits on sale and purchase of rural land wrought by speculative pressures, and reduces the chances of families losing their collectively owned land as a result of unilateral decision by one individual family member to sell it. Hence, Burkina Faso's collective APFR land titles only allow for newly titled land plots to be bought and sold if all registered members of the family agree to the decision. Significantly, although the title is transferable, it cannot be used as collateral for bank loans (Jacob, Hochet and Ouedraogo, 2011). The legalisation of this collective type of land ownership is perceived as a significant milestone for peasant family farmer tenure security, not just in Burkina Faso, but in the wider West African region.²²²

Moreover, formalisation of tenure in Burkina Faso was negotiated as a system regulated by progressive taxation that "supports rural family farms founded on collective [...] possession, thanks to very low titling costs" (CTFD, 2015:46). Indeed, the 2009 law applies differentiated taxation brackets on land registration procedures as well as on land markets. Hence, progressively taxed land registration procedures encourage the formalisation of collectively held titles over individual titles, making it six times cheaper to register a collectively owned land plot than an individually held one. Furthermore, individual plots' first registration are taxed thirteen times less than those acquired from the sale of previously titled ones, in order to discourage land reselling after titling (*Ibid.*).

Hence, Burkina Faso's APFR, created by Law 034/2009, is a balancing exercise between collective and individual rights. It favours collective rights above all. Yet the tax breaks given to individuals at first registration (versus higher taxed buyers of previously titled land) enables women and youth to guarantee smaller plots that are often allowed in tandem with collectively held land under customary practices. This allows to strike a formalised balance between individual women and youth autonomy within collectively held land tenure regimes, and centralised patriarchal customary tenure community and family systems. Negotiated internal

²²² Interviews AO-WA15 and AR-WA3. Implementation is still at an incipient stage, however, with lack of funding a major challenge. As of mid-2017 only 69 of Burkina Faso's 365 local *communes* were delivering APFR land titles, and these were dependent upon international donor financing.

consultations at village levels conducted or mediated by members of Burkinan ROPPA platform Faso Peasant Confederation (CPF) largely contributed to generate these compromises.

Similarly, Guinea-Bissau's 2017 proposed application decree for its 1998 Land Law takes great care not to equate land titling with facilitation of land transactions, linking it instead with ameliorated access to credit. Thus,

When the title is obtained [and registered] at the civil registry, you have a rural concession for 90 years, [which is] automatically renewable, as long as all exigencies are met, [including] environmental norms. The land is yours. So you have your registered title, and can with this title obtain credit. Now, you will not be able to sell this title. You have to go through the State, and need to come back again to negotiate with the community. [...] Recognize traditional authority with modern law.²²³

The proposed Bissau-Guinean decree found not only legal-administrative, but also economic policy instruments to limit the extent of these land transfers in both value and land size, through what would amount to a new progressive land taxation system. The former head of the land commission Mario Lopes Martins described it as follows:

Apart from the land commissions, the central element [of the new land law and implementation decree] is the tax. [...]. The law created the [rural land] tenure tax mechanism, with the goal of avoiding grabbing, concentration of land. The tax will depend on the area that is occupied. If one occupies 100 ha, one already knows that they will have to pay a higher tax. And [he who holds] less than 5 ha does not pay anything. This is already created in the [1998] land law. And the application decree will create the mechanism of how to collect this income. [...] For now, big businesses that have land are not paying [any] tax. [...] In Guinea-Bissau, people want to seize lands, to later be able to sell, for cashew plantations.

The 1998 Land Law, and ensuing 2017 implementation decree proposal resulted from what was described by civil society and governmental Bissau-Guinean interviewees as an ample and participatory consultation process. This process was simultaneous with the participation of ROPPA-affiliated national platform QNCOCPA,²²⁴ (formed in the early 2000s with the support of other ROPPA national platforms, particularly CNCR).

Another significant land law elaboration process that limits land transactions, while allowing efforts towards land titling, occurred in Benin. ROPPA-affiliated PNOPPA, and particularly Benin's National Peasants Union²²⁵ (SYNPA or *Synergie Paysanne*) had a crucial role in establishing the country's *Code Foncier et Domanial*, conceived as a defensive rampart against

²²³ Interview CS-WA4.

²²⁴ *Quadro Nacional de Concertação das Organizações Camponesas e Produtores Agrícolas da Guiné-Bissau*.

²²⁵ *Syndicat National des Paysans du Bénin*.

foreign and domestic land grabbing of Beninese peasants' lands (see Figure 14). As one of PNOPPA's technical advisers explained:

This code has reduced the ease for people [to buy and sell lands], it did reduce it. There are certain thresholds that, when attained, require the city council to give its authorisation; there are [other, higher] thresholds that, when attained, require the council of ministers' [authorisation]. In terms of volume, of number of hectares, the decision must be taken [...]. It was not like that before [the approval of the law]. And one [must] really demonstrate that it is an agricultural activity [undertaken on the land]. Because people take the lands, they leave, they hoard, whereas the peasants aim to have land to produce.²²⁶



Figure 15: Poster by Beninese PNOPPA member SYNPA against foreign land grabbing²²⁷
(Source: farmlandgrab.org)

While the Beninese bill placed limits on the purchase and sale of land, by requiring the approval of local or national authorities depending on the size of the plot, Mali's 2017 land bill creates local land commissions with a similar goal. This was cited by ROPPA and CNOP President Ibrahim Coulibaly as a form of limiting large-scale land transactions:

I think that with the new [Malian land] bill, it is very difficult to have large-scale land grabbing. Small grabbing [is] very difficult [to avoid], as [it is] insidious. But, one of the important advances, which will enable to manage this is the land commission. In each village. We had already seen it in the texts, at the municipal level. But we brought them to the lowest level, the villages. And all of the sensibilities will be in them. In principle - I say in principle, because this is never absolute - in principle, we cannot, not even a

²²⁶ Interview AO-WA19.

²²⁷ Top line: 'Campaign against mass purchase of agricultural lands in Benin'. Centre-diagonal: 'Not for sale'. Bottom line: 'Let us preserve our lands from the greed of multinationals and agribusiness'.

[whole] family can sell their land if [agreement] from the commission is not there. Before the bill, the law said that any member of a family could go sell a part of the family's land heritage. Without consulting anyone. So that has [now] become impossible. [...] The real comfort for land grabbers is when people do not speak to each other. But as soon as people speak to each other, the situation becomes complicated for them.²²⁸

Regional land policy diffusion processes were identified in several conversations with members of ROPPA national platforms, as well as West African national governments. For instance, family farmer representatives of Senegal's CNCR visited Burkina Faso, seen as a relevant experience of AO policy influence in land tenure legislation. ROPPA Executive Secretary and CNCR President Nadjirou Sall described: "with ROPPA facilitation, Senegalese farmers went to visit that experience [...] to see what [it] could bring to our propositions in the land reform policy process in Senegal".²²⁹

Similarly, Guinea-Bissau's land application decree elaborated and sent for appreciation to the council of ministers in mid-2017, almost 20 years after approval of the 1998 Land Law also drew from neighbouring countries' experience. As the former director of Guinea-Bissau's national land commission explained:

[ROPPA President of Honour] Mamadou Cissokho is a colleague, with whom we worked. Because, you know, in the process of elaboration of the land law, we did not only consult at the national level, we also consulted and observed the experience at the level of the countries of the sub-region. We started in Chad, [then] Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, and [Guinea] Conacry. Therefore, our law was inspired [not only on the qualities but also] on the faults of the neighbours.²³⁰

Three decades from the initial external and internal pressures towards titling and privatisation of land in WA, the persistent low proportions in land titling across the region raises several questions. On the one hand, the *de facto* non-formalisation of West African land means that it is largely managed by local communities. Yet the higher prevalence of titling and privatisation in fertile enclaves and urban perimeters is only the visible tip of a much larger pool of increasingly active and dynamic informal land markets (Lavigne Delville et al., 2017).

In the last two to three decades informal land markets have tended towards higher levels of concentration in ownership, although West African land concentration levels today are still far

²²⁸ Interview AO-WA22

²²⁹ Interview AO-WA11.

²³⁰ Interview CS-WA4.

lower than those of South America. ROPPA's participation in national land policy processes has aimed to regulate informal land markets and stabilize land tenure systems to ensure a focus on policies of support to family farms' production and distribution. Yet given that state implementation capacity is still very low, ROPPA and its partners in academia, government and international organisations have defended that existing land tenure systems in West Africa necessitate participatory local governance systems capable of implementing the regulation of informal land transactions, by submitting these to collective approval by village and inter-village commissions. The legal provision for these types of local commissions, usually including equal participation of women and youth, is a form of organising what are in practice mixed customary and statutory land tenure regimes, by submitting them to local collective forms of regulation.

5.2.3 Legally enshrining local village commissions to regulate land tenure

Regardless of variations on the nature of new land policies across West Africa, ROPPA's national platforms have consistently advocated for the creation of participatory land commissions at all administrative instances, particularly at the most local village (or inter-village) levels. This emphasis also reflects the nature of consultative processes undertaken by ROPPA members to discuss the content of new legislations.

The case of Senegal illustrates ROPPA's and its national platforms' combined strategies of mobilisation outside the state and participation inside its invited spaces in order to influence policy. Debates on modernisation of the country's land law, approved in the post-independence years (1964), were put back onto the negotiating table by the Senegalese government starting in 1996. The LOASP process initially aimed to include land policy as one of its main pillars (see chapter 6). However, given the highly controversial nature of some policy proposals, particularly relating to successive governments' and investors' intention of titling and privatising land, and strong opposition from civil society, negotiation of the land chapter was postponed to enable approval of the remaining parts of LOASP in 2004.²³¹

²³¹ Interview AO-WA8.

A first land commission was formed in 2005 by then-President Wade but did not bring the policy formulation process to fruition. Wade's successor Macky Sall created a new National Land Policy Commission (CNRF) in 2013. However, this commission initially did not include Senegal's main peasant family farmer organisation. CNCR thus used its mobilising power throughout the country to pressure the government into opening up the land commission to its members' participation, as one of the AO's key land policy experts recalled:

We launched a national campaign to tell the producers: 'the state is moving towards land reform, and you are not represented in this commission'. Everywhere in the country, there were people voicing their concerns. [...] The president of the commission at the time certainly heard during several days 'CNCR, land reform, CNCR, land reform...', until one day we met in a workshop with the World Bank, which was about land tenure. And since they wanted to give voice to civil society, they called on CNCR, [and] we recalled in our intervention our whole trajectory, our legitimacy. So he was there, and in his speech said [...]: 'well, the commission is open, it is democratic [...], so all of those who wish to be part of it can do so'. So I asked CNCR to let 5 members take part, designate 5 delegates. Then he sent us a correspondence. We then sent a list of the 5 delegates. That is how, since then, we are members.²³²

When CNCR joined CNRF, its members were better prepared than most to influence policy deliberations, given that they had previously elaborated land policy proposals in their own autonomous space since 2010, in the wake of the land grabbing crisis. This space, the Framework for Reflection and Action on Land Tenure in Senegal (CRAFS) was more plural, in that it included many other actors from civil society and academia, but was also shielded from private sector and state-linked lobbies favouring land privatisation.

At CNRF, state, private sector actors, and local elected officials all defended the facilitation of private investment through land titling and privatisation. Yet by the time CNCR was accepted into the national land commission, it was equipped with well-debated and thought-out positions on a variety of issues related to land tenure policy. These went beyond defensive actions to resist land-grabbing, which had been the initial spark for the creation of CRAFS. Indeed, CNCR had mobilised resources to organise encounters and exchanges throughout the country, in order to debate and harmonise its positions through contacts with their bases. Thus,

CNCR was a bit of a 'drive belt' between civil society and the national land commission. So every technical document produced at the level of the commission was brought to civil society. We analyse this together, we define our common position and at the next meeting of the commission, CNCR has a document that it has already sent to the commission, which advocates to defend our positions.²³³

²³² Interview AO-WA8.

²³³ Interview AO-WA8.

CNCR had allies in the national land commission: these were chiefly urban civil society actors such as CONGAD, a national NGO collective; the Association of Women Senegalese Jurists; and ENDA-PRONAT, the Senegalese chapter of international NGO network ENDA Tiers-Monde. All four organisations were members of the autonomous land policy debating space (CRAFS), which enabled them to align their positions prior to meeting with other actors at the national land commission (CNRF). There, CNCR and these CSOs supported each others' interventions. Often, the others gave voice to CNCR, seen as the most legitimate collective actor to speak for the immense contingent of Senegalese family farmers. This reinforced the legitimacy of CNCR's proposals inside the national invited space. As one of CNCR's representatives in the national land commission put it: "each time we have to defend certain positions, I ask for the floor, explain our positions, and the [three other CRAFS and CNFR members] complement these in their own interventions".²³⁴

As a result of the strength and legitimacy of CNCR interventions, a significant part of their proposals were incorporated into the commission's final document and officially delivered to President Macky Sall on 20 April 2017, after two years of deliberations. The document's four 'strategic objectives' related to rural land tenure have a balanced wording that manifestly aims to reconcile the conflicting interests of the commission's diverse participants. For instance, Strategic Objective 1 ('Attributing real tenure rights to family farms, agricultural entrepreneurs and other users of natural resources') goes beyond a no-titling versus titling-privatising dichotomy, when it states that "the main actors of the tenure system [...] consider it is essential to recognize the types of existing rights [...] in a chain of formalisation comprising a gradation of tenure rights that may be of different juridical nature, and bridges enabling to shift from one type of title to another" (CNRF, 2016:72).

Further, the same strategic objective aims to regulate access of private investors to land, through what appears as a carefully worded balance between private sector and family farmer interests: on the one hand it recommends lifting some of the barriers to productive agricultural investment that exist under the current 1964 legislation; on the other, it advocates giving

²³⁴ Interview AO-WA8.

"development tools for residents of territories to develop their localities and protecting members of rural communities against potential land speculators" (CNRF, 2016:73). Yet despite the painstakingly negotiated compromises worded in the commission's final report, the latter still generated resistances within influential sectors of Senegalese society, preventing its final approval by the government.

Indeed, President Sall did not follow through with the institutional procedures that would allow for an incorporation of the commission's recommendations into national legislation. In the meantime, CNRF was dissolved, provoking consternation among its CRAFS members. They drafted an open letter to the President reaffirming the democratic and representative credentials of the policy formulation process, and the national commission's legitimacy, requesting resumption of activities based on the "participatory process [that] enabled the CNRF to conduct 14 Regional Development Committees, 45 departmental workshops, and 45 intercommunal workshops, adding up to a total of 108 meetings in which close to 38.000 people have taken part" (CRAFS, 2017:7).

Although not explicit, resistance from powerful private sector lobbies with their political and civil servant representatives against what they perceived as a set of recommendations too far removed from their immediate interests is nevertheless made evident by the erratic approval of Presidential decrees attributing lands for specific use (such as Law n°2017-06, approved on 6 January 2017, related to Special Economic Zones which did not result from consultations with civil society), without a coherent national policy framework, as criticised by ENDA-PRONAT head Mariam Sow in interviews given to the Senegalese press (Le Quotidien, 2017).

After many months of silence on the commission's land proposal, President Sall's first public comments were expressed as strong opposition towards "transferring the management of lands to local authorities", which according to him would lead to Senegal not having any more lands available for agricultural investment (Le Quotidien, 2017:3). Several commission participants subsequently urged the President to read its document more carefully, as they argued that what it does is create a better balance in the attribution of responsibilities amongst different institutional actors involved in Senegalese land tenure governance, which may lead to sounder and more coherent investments. According to Mariam Sow, the document requests to

prevent the "commodification of land", and calls for the establishment of "citizen accountability mechanisms" through officially recognised committees. It also calls for recognition of "[land] governance instruments [that have been] elaborated by local communities [such as] Soil Use Plans (*Plans d'Occupation des Sols*) [...]" and thus advocates a "shared local governance" model (*Ibid*:4).

When asked to what extent CNCR had been able to influence the land policy document in the national commission, one of the AO's land policy technicians highlighted that, if approved, a key gain introduced by the new land law would be the creation of "other levels of tenure governance":

The village, which has a very important role in the management of tenure, practically did not have any responsibility - because we would only say "the village chief must be included [in discussions]" when one would take lands in his territory. This is too vague. We called for the establishment of village or inter-village commissions.

Securing land tenure in West Africa in the short term has involved a great deal of mobilisation to defend collectively held plots against state-authorized larger-scale land grabs. It has also involved reframing land policy debates at regional level (CILSS, ECOWAS, UEMOA) beyond the titling-privatising narrative, to influence national legislations under reformulation in most of the region's countries. Yet a much more pervasive but 'silent' process of land alienation and concentration continues to grow as a result of increased commodification of land through informal land markets. This has led to a perceived necessity among ROPPA's leadership to regulate informal capitalist land markets while ensuring customary land transfers such as generational succession processes, under strengthened collective/individual combined forms of possession. Additionally, formalisation of land tenure with effective community and state regulation would potentially enable to reconcile efficient resource allocation with socially and culturally rooted modes of production, but also ensure equal rights of women, youth, or transborder migrants.

These main guidelines on how land policy titling should ideally occur as a positive alternative to titling-privatising in order to regulate informal land markets, by the same token aimed to stabilise land tenure and render it more transparent, secure and equitable. National laws adopted in Burkina Faso (2009) and Mali (2017), and the work of Senegal's land commission CNRF (2013-2017) towards substituting its 1964 law, have aimed to conserve a comparatively

well-distributed economic agrarian landscape ensured by traditional customary tenure, while reforming the most exploitative dimensions of patriarchal family farming, particularly regarding socially necessary labour and local decision-making rules, regarding both economic management and political participation.²³⁵

Yet implementing such an ambitious alternative land policy agenda laid out in these laws without unrealistically relying on almost inexistent state means has been one of the central puzzles around which ROPPA and its national-level platforms have debated and proposed policy measures in different countries. In this respect, consultations, undertaken in hundreds of localities across West African countries became the site of an affirmation of rural communities, often in negotiation and partnership with local authorities. This has included village-level informal dispute settlements on land transfers as well as makeshift contracts signed between two or more parties and stamped by local authorities as semi-formal mechanisms enabling a bottom-up local political and economic administration, in order to surpass engrained top-down and clientelistic relationship patterns with public authorities (Lavigne Delville et al., 2017).

While countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali or Benin have approved laws with encouraging provisions (notwithstanding difficult implementation), Senegal's mobilisation network (outside state institutions) and participation in a government-mediated 2010s policy process has not as of yet yielded a new policy to replace its 1964 land law. The almost decade-long participatory policy formulation with consultation at its bases has nevertheless revealed the important value of participation in itself for territorial policy articulation, across local, national, and regional levels – given that the clear and convincing presentation of viable land policy alternatives contributes to partially deconstruct the inevitability of the land titling-privatisation narrative. The stated goal of reaffirming local communities as prime legal responsibility bearers with regards to economic decisions made on their lands thus aims to rebalance local communities' economic and political role with regards to land policy, particularly to secure land tenure by democratically regulating land transfers through local village and inter-village commissions. Hence, if regionally articulated

²³⁵ The latter shall be seen in greater detail in chapter 6 (section 6.2.2) when analysing the national agricultural policy frameworks (*lois d'orientation agricole*), whose formulation processes in the last two decades were in some cases (e.g. Senegal, Mali) intertwined with those of the land laws discussed in this chapter.

resistance to land grabbing appears as the immediate defensive priority to ROPPA, this can be potentiated in the longer term by legally recognising and updating *de facto* decentralised village and inter-village forms of collective land governance to enable articulated regional development.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined regional land policy processes in two regions with very different agrarian structures. Despite those differences, both COPROFAM and ROPPA have aimed to address three key inter-related challenges of rural land policy: i) attempts to *regulate land transfers* within articulated regional integration strategies (5.2.1), including by putting breaks on externally-driven land concentration pressures (5.1.2); ii) ensuring *participatory land governance*, whether via legally-backed direct action to enable land redistribution (5.1.1), or wide-ranging local-level consultations within participatory national policy processes (5.2.3); iii) efforts to *secure distributed land* by formally recognising and updating collective forms of land tenure (5.1.3 and 5.2.2).

The regional policy drive to regulate land transfers in both regions was mainly a 'defensive' strategy: in both cases, regional agrarian discourse contributed to shed public light on how global production and distribution agrifood firms are the largest links of ongoing national land concentration processes. Efforts to influence land policy through regional norms or guidelines (whether via REAF/MERCOSUR or ECOWAS, UEMOA, and AU) have nevertheless proved elusive until now. This is in no small part due to their blocking by politically influential dependent bourgeoisies in both regions, whether their role in land concentration occurs still mainly within national borders (WA) or spills over across transborder agrarian territories (SA). Yet regional policy venues have served in both cases as spaces for policy diffusion, influencing national policies within each region. This has enabled the approval of quantified limits to foreign land acquisition by law in Argentina and infralegal norms in Brazil and Uruguay (5.1.2), despite the veto to a REAF-drafted regional norm by MERCOSUR's highest governing body. Resistance to land grabbing in West Africa was likewise not mainly driven by regional land policy initiatives. It occurred primarily on the ground with peasant mobilisations at local village level, as well as by

awareness raising on the magnitude of foreign land alienation at national, regional, and global discussion forums (5.2.1).

Regional land policy debates involving COPROFAM and ROPPA also evidenced patterns across countries of a same region in their efforts to construct alternative land policies, whether to ensure participatory land tenure governance (5.1.1 and 5.2.3) or to secure existing (collectively held or state redistributed) land (5.1.3 and 5.2.2). Regarding the former, a common thread between almost symmetrically opposed (SA and WA) land questions is linked in both cases to efforts to democratise the regulation of land transfers: whether it is to prevent largely informal land markets from further concentrating and fragmenting land through participatory consultations and policy dialogue in WA, or enabling more substantial proportions of land to be redistributed based on the need for it to fulfill a 'social function' in SA. The recognition of village and inter-village commissions in most WA land laws of recent decades is a significant improvement in democratising land tenure governance (5.2.2 and 5.2.3). In SA, despite significant initial gains in the 1990s and 2000s, criminalisation of land occupations, financial deregulation (e.g. via financialisation of agrarian reform debt bonds in Brazil, ultimately diverting state resources to remunerate landholders in breach of SFLP, instead of penalising them) and post-2008 fiscal constraints all but eliminated prospects for further land redistribution with delayed compensation in the 2010s (5.1.1). Indeed, during this latter period, a more pressing concern became the strengthening of collectively held (e.g. via titling of indigenous lands) and redistributed land tenure (e.g. through agricultural support policies in Brazil and/or keeping reformed land as a state lease in Uruguay) to avoid it being lost to land concentration pressures (5.1.3).

The above has shown how the capacity to regulate land transfers – whether to enforce land redistribution or to halt land concentration – is closely linked to fiscal policy instruments such as progressive taxation, as it already was in early 20th century SA (see chapter 3) and has been brought to the fore in present-day WA policy processes (e.g. laws aiming to discourage collective land privatisation and concentration, seen in 5.2.2). These can potentially curb hoarding of land for financial speculation while augmenting state resources to redistribute land and invest in small or medium-scale production. Indeed, progressive taxation has been included as part of land

policies that aim to slow down the concentration of land as in Burkina Faso or Guinea-Bissau's land policy processes (5.2.2), and reinvest fiscal resources into land distribution as with Uruguay's INC (5.1.3).

While capacity to implement such measures at scale is still very low, their presence in land policy debates of both regions is nonetheless significant, insofar as it reveals an aim on the part of RAO members from both regions to regulate unfettered land markets through fiscally redistributive land policy instruments. As we shall see in the following chapter, fiscal capacity is also a key determinant of whether peasant family farmers remain part of a largely informal economic sector, or become recognised as a specific rural labouring category with access to specific support policies.

Chapter 6 - Legal recognition of family farmers as self-managed rural labouring class

Introduction

The second policy process examined in this research is the least easy to pin down, because differently from land tenure or trade policies, it is not as obviously recognisable in classic agrarian and development policy repertoires. It nevertheless has crucial and manifold implications related to: i) age-old debates on defining who is and who is not a (*peasant*) *family farmer* and on distinguishing subcategories within that universe; ii) how members of this rural sector collectively self-represent themselves through their discursive mobilisation (i.e. aiming to reflect agrarian organisations' unity in diversity) and participation (i.e. translating popular claims into implementable policy language) strategies, and; iii) formal recognition of PFF's rights - whether political and civil (such as the right to participate in policy processes), or economic, social and cultural (such as obtaining access to national social security systems). Technical definition criteria, collective self-identification, and rights-based citizenship claims indeed all underpin RAOs' drives for the recognition of peasant family farming as a distinct category and creation of specific public policies.

COPROFAM and ROPPA both orient their claims by representing members' collective interests as those of 'peasant family farmers'²³⁶ in each region. The diverse rural sector encompassed by this term has often been alternately (self-)identified as 'peasants' (e.g. by LVC), 'smallholders' (e.g. by the WB), or 'small-scale food producers' (e.g. at the CFS), among other partly interchangeable or contested terms used in international policy debating arenas and official documents. In both the South American and West African cases, achieving PFF recognition as a distinct economic and social category through legislation and registries is perceived as a stepping stone towards promoting an alternative rural development paradigm. Though often overlooked – whether for its seemingly secondary technicalities, or precisely because of its far-

²³⁶ As mentioned in chapter 1, frequent (though not systematic) addition of the term 'peasant' (and 'indigenous' in SA) before 'family farming/er' serves to underscore the predominance of family labour in this type of farming. This is in accordance with both COPROFAM and ROPPA's understandings of the term 'family farming' (as shall be explored further in this chapter), but different from uses of it that designate distinct types of actors (e.g. large-scale family-run agribusiness enterprises).

reaching policy implications – it is a key policy drive for both RAOs. Yet these efforts have also been fraught with the difficulties of formulating policies and the challenges of implementing them.

How did regional invited space negotiations reach agreement on formal criteria to clearly distinguish small and medium family farmers from large-scale agribusiness? How did negotiated criteria and related typologies include and safeguard the interests of different rural labouring class fractions within the broader family farming sector? To what extent did legal recognition of the family farm address gendered and generational economic roles within rural families and communities? Has legal recognition enabled to channel sufficient resources in a coherent and equitable way towards supporting family farmers' economic autonomy?

The tracing of policy processes in both regions follows pioneering countries Brazil, Chile (SA) and Senegal (WA) in tandem with regional institutions MERCOSUR and ECOWAS, and later key neighbouring countries' policy processes (Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay in SA; Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso in WA). Subsequent regional-national policy diffusion links across these and other countries of both RAOs have informed implementation efforts, particularly through mutual learning from strengths and weaknesses between earlier and later adopters.

In subsections 6.1.1 and 6.2.1 I look at the drives for family farmer recognition in pioneer countries Brazil/Chile and Senegal in the context of regional integration processes in which COPROFAM and ROPPA pressed for dialogue space, under concerns over the consequences of unfettered regional trade for both regions' family farming sectors. It explores how regional-level recognition of AOs as legitimate interlocutors and of PFF as a distinct policy category of their contiguous countries' agrarian landscape were concomitant in both regions.

This was followed a few years later by technical and legal debates underpinning policy diffusion processes across countries of each region. These processes were propelled by efforts to build regional articulated rural labouring class alliances for family farmer recognition in both regions. Diffusion paths relied more strongly on MERCOSUR as driver of Brazil's regional foreign policy in SA (6.1.2), whereas they were principally characterized by the dense web of peasant leaders, civil servants, academic and technical experts, and international organisation actors convened by ROPPA and its partners across the francophone WA countries (6.2.2).

6.1 Creation and diffusion of specific policies for family farming in South America

This section shows how COPROFAM's members came to define themselves as *family farmers*²³⁷, and how this discursive frame has served both for collective self-representation and to orient specifically-tailored state support. It traces the origins of the term's use in early 1990s Brazil, the result of a wide rural labouring class alliance cristallized within CUT²³⁸/CONTAG (with the support of engaged Brazilian academics and civil servants) in response to the effects of an acute economic crisis on the country's agricultural sector since the early 1980s. It then looks at the spread and consolidation of the term's use in Brazil through local municipal-level invited spaces, and in MERCOSUR through the regional invited space of REAF.

In the above local, national, and regional spaces, significant debates amongst COPROFAM members, academics, and civil servants revolved around the criteria that define the PFF sector. These debates had simultaneous implications for AO membership, collective self-representation in invited spaces, and policy targeting. These interrelated dimensions of the *family farming* discursive frame have contributed to strengthen a regional class alliance in the Southern Cone between self-identified peasants, indigenous/traditional peoples, and small/medium producers, under the FF umbrella term (or its latter (P)(I)FF²³⁹ variations).

Following a chronological-thematic periodisation, I look at COPROFAM representatives' efforts at negotiating the creation of specific policies for PFF in two networks of invited spaces: Brazil's national discursive arenas and creation of a National Programme for the Strengthening of Family Farming (PRONAF), the region's most comprehensive policy for PFF (6.1.1); MERCOSUR's REAF and the role of its national-level subsidiary spaces in agreeing on a regional family farmer definition and creating national registries (6.1.2).

²³⁷ And after 2003, as *peasant and indigenous family farmers*.

²³⁸ *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* (Unified Workers' Central). CUT was the main autonomous urban labour union to spearhead Brazilian civil society's push towards political democratisation in the early 1980s. CUT's rural wing would have a key role in Brazil's *family farmer* debate. As it began to offer an alternative to CONTAG for PFF membership in the late 1980s and early 1990s, negotiations between both eventually led to CONTAG and CUT's fusion in 1995, which would last until 2009.

²³⁹ (Peasant) (and Indigenous) Family Farming(er). See 6.1.1 below.

6.1.1 Family farming identities and representations in the Southern Cone

This first sub-section assesses the public self-representation of COPROFAM and its national and local member organisations. It focuses on three main self-identifying discursive frames dating from the RAO's formation period: small/medium producers, peasants, and indigenous peoples. It first shows how in 1990s Chile and Brazil, those previously existing collective identities fused under the umbrella term 'family farming'²⁴⁰ to become a nationally recognised socio-economic category entitled to specific public policies. It then looks at why this was not the case in Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, where cohesive narratives to unite competing rural labouring class fractions across diverse agrarian territories initially failed to materialise. This changed in the following decade with the creation of REAF in 2004 (see chapter 3), and as a result of deliberations within it to formally recognize family farming in MERCOSUR's institutions. FF eventually became a distinctive public policy category in all of the regional bloc's founding member countries, and to varying degrees in most of SA's other countries (see 6.1.2).

PRONAF, created in Brazil in 1996, was the first specific policy for FF in the region. Its creation stemmed from the resurgence of Southern Cone AOs during the 1980s and 1990s in the space left void by an economic crisis of the agricultural sector and potentiated by a simultaneous political democratisation process (see chapter 3). Two out of several key milestones towards PRONAF's creation are highlighted here: i) CONTAG and CUT's negotiated participation in elaborating Brazil's Federal Constitution (1988) and its related Agricultural (1991) and Agrarian (1993) laws, and; ii) mobilisations against the negative consequences of MERCOSUR's (1991) initial import tariff reductions. Although CONTAG and CUT's earlier internal debates had already yielded the essence of the criteria to be used in subsequent legal definitions, the use of the term 'family farming' was subsequently adopted by both, particularly in close dialogue with Brazilian and international agrarian scholars. With AO unity and strength at its height in the mid-1990s, the government was compelled to negotiate. For Brazil's government at the time, taking on board

²⁴⁰ Increasingly substituted by the more inclusive 'peasant and indigenous family farming' (*agricultura familiar campesina e indígena*) discursive frame in the 2000s and 2010s.

AO demands for tailored policies was also a way of partly giving in on the agricultural policy front, and thereby avoid making more concessions on the agrarian reform front (see chapter 5). A confluence of AO mobilisation, academic debates, and negotiations with government thus resulted in the creation of PRONAF in 1996, and in its gradual expansion during the late 1990s and 2000s.

Before COPROFAM's creation in 1994, several terms were used by its national-level AOs to designate their members. Yet two terms predominated: peasant,²⁴¹ and small (or medium) producer. In broad terms, the peasant (*campesino*) identity was predominant in most of Latin America's rural areas, except in the Southern Cone (particularly its temperate climate area), where use of the term small and medium producer (*pequeño y mediano productor*) became the norm from the 1970s onwards.²⁴² Indeed, 'small and medium producer' is prevalent and 'peasant' is generally absent in COPROFAM's key formative organisations which possess a significant base in temperate agrarian territories – Uruguay's CNFR, Argentina's FAA, and Brazil's southern CONTAG federations. Yet in Brazil and Chile – who pioneered legal recognition of FF as a specific policy category in the early 1990s – both concepts somehow coexisted, albeit with tensions, since the 1970s.

There, authoritarian states created and disseminated the technocratic category of *small and medium producer* through a limited number of policies, substituting the politically charged term *peasant* associated with pre-dictatorship struggles for agrarian reform. Hence, in Chile, "[d]uring the dictatorship years, the concept of 'small agriculture' was instated, perhaps because the 'peasant' concept referred to social and political struggles that the regime had no interest in remembering" (Berdegúe, 2014:9). Similarly, in Brazil, use of the term "small production contributed to depoliticize the theme [given that] the concept of peasantry was mostly associated to political and ideological" debates and struggles (Porto e Siqueira, 1991, cited by Grisa, 2012:122).

Family farmer registries were first instated in Chile and Brazil in the early to mid-1990s. These drew from both the *peasant* and *small producer* conceptions. While the former was

²⁴¹ Campesino/Camponês.

²⁴² Interview IR-SA1.

connected to AO struggles and intellectual debates, and the latter to government policy implementation necessities, both concepts' operationalisation aimed publics that largely overlapped. This is reflected in Chile's Law 18.910 (1990), the region's first piece of national legislation to define the public later referred to as family farmers. As explained by MUCECH's Orlando Contreras:

In 1990, INDAP's organic law was reformed, small producers and peasants were included, under a law that defined the sector, with a certain quantity of economic resources, with a certain number of hectares, and having to live in a rural area. And this, which did not appear to be very relevant to the rest of society, became very relevant for us. Because not anyone can be in INDAP. It is a segment of society that represents small-scale agriculture. The previous law [dating from INDAP's creation in 1962] was quite ambiguous, but this was now clarified. [Hence] Chile advanced rapidly when [family farmer] registries were discussed in REAF [as it] already had a registry.²⁴³

Chile's law 18.910 defines both the *small producer* and the *peasant* as policy target categories, with some overlap, but with the significant difference that *peasants* can also be wage labourers. Indeed, a significant part of the ranks of Chile's MUCECH and Brazil's CONTAG were members of local agricultural worker unions dating from the 1960s-1970s (see chapter 3).

Conversely, Uruguay's CNFR and Argentina's FAA members were officially considered by their countries' institutional frameworks as employers' organisations, even if their represented members mostly used their own family labour and only exceptionally hired outside wage workers. Yet because these two century-old national AOs have never included agricultural wage labour unions, and many of their farmers own their land as private property since the 1950s-1960s, they have been considered by default as employer organisations in both countries' policy dialogue representation mechanisms. Hence, according to former CNFR president Fernando López, in Uruguay's National Rural Council, a state-mediated deliberative space, "Comisión Nacional [de Fomento Rural, i.e. CNFR] participates as rural 'employer'". Nevertheless, Uruguay's largest AO maintains "good relations with the workers' delegates [and has] made some common proposals with the workers unions".²⁴⁴ FAA's relations with agricultural labour unions or smaller-scale peasant organisations has historically been more turbulent, however, and has typically alternated between periods of collaboration and others of tension and confrontation (see

²⁴³ Interview AO-SA2.

²⁴⁴ Interview AO-SA1.

chapter 3). Still, its members primarily use their own family labour to work the land, and thus fall within the family farmer definitions adopted in the region during the 1990s-2000s.

At MERCOSUR's inception, because of their 'employer' status, CNFR and FAA were represented in CONASUR (later FARM²⁴⁵), a dialogue space dominated by large-scale agribusiness associations holding meetings with ministers of agriculture. However, as the only small/medium farmer organisations, CNFR and FAA's demands for specific policy treatment were systematically ignored. This led them to seek an alliance with more similar organisations from neighbouring Southern Cone countries, eventually resulting in COPROFAM's creation in 1994 (Riella, 2002) (see chapter 3).

COPROFAM's foundation occurred only a few months before CONTAG's official adoption of the term 'family farming' to describe the wider rural labouring classes and middle farming sectors in Brazil. The RAO's name uses the similar term 'family producers', which was often already used by counterpart organisations in Argentina and Uruguay, as well as in Brazil's North.²⁴⁶

Until the 1990s, "CONTAG and all the Brazilian rural workers [...] were not conceptualized as family farming. Our conceptualisation was 'small farmer'"²⁴⁷. In official CONTAG documents produced in the South, rural workers with access to land²⁴⁸ self-identified as "small farmers".²⁴⁹ In CONTAG documents produced in the Northeast, however, members usually referred to themselves as "peasants".²⁵⁰ According to Alberto Broch, both terms were plagued with negative connotations in general public opinion: "that thing seen as small, miserable, poor, subsistence [farming]".²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ *Federación de Asociaciones Rurales del MERCOSUR* (Federations of Rural Associations of MERCOSUR).

²⁴⁶ Federations from Brazil's North (mostly comprised by the Amazon rainforest biome) frequently referred to themselves as 'family producers'. This related to their own rural activities, predominantly linked to forestry and fishing, often within traditional livelihoods and at odds with mainstream notions of 'farming' (Interview AR-SA1).

²⁴⁷ Interview AO-SA4.

²⁴⁸ CONTAG's wide membership had a significant parcel of landless agricultural wage labourers since its creation in 1963 (see chapter 3). In 2015, a separate but closely associated entity (CONTAR) was created to advocate for this rural labouring fraction's specific needs.

²⁴⁹ *Pequeno agricultor*.

²⁵⁰ *Camponês*. This is a clear inheritance from the 1950s and 1960s *peasant leagues*, which were particularly strong in Brazil's Northeast (see Chapter 3).

²⁵¹ Interview AO-SA4.

The 1980s saw a resurgence of rural mobilisation from peasantries (particularly from Brazil's southern states) who organised into unions (led by CUT) and social movements (led by the MST) and contested CONTAG's legalistic approach of 'state-centric' negotiation, seeking alternative forms of collective action (Picolotto, 2014). However, as CUT began structuring its Rural Workers National Department (DNTR), its leadership became increasingly dominated by small/medium producers, while the proportion of agricultural wage labourers declined (Favareto, 2006). Indeed, whilst during the 1950s-60s, wage labourers' claims to labouring rights on a par with urban counterparts were central, and in the 1970s-80s sugarcane cutters' strikes still had a central role in rural unions' mobilisations, by the 1990s structural changes in the economy²⁵² had weakened wage labourers' relative weight within rural unions (Favareto, 2006).

Moreover, whereas direct labour-capital negotiations previously predominated, the new democratic regime allowed for greater negotiation space with the state. This justified calls within CUT's rural department to establish distinct representative structures for wage labourers (who negotiated working conditions with employers' unions) and for small/medium producers (who negotiated public policies with the state).²⁵³ This collided with CONTAG's historical stance of maintaining unity in diversity through a single national representative confederation that included both wage labourer and peasant family farmer trade unions.

Yet the two competing rural unions began a gradual approximation during the 1990s. CUT's initial autonomous posture eventually ceded ground to tactical considerations as it aimed to expand its reach within existing rural unions, and indeed many national CUT leaders were locally affiliated to CONTAG-linked organisations. CUT stood to benefit from the capillarity of CONTAG's far-reaching presence and negotiation capacity with state actors across Brazil. CONTAG on the other hand seized the opportunity for a much-needed internal renewal by feeding off the innovative policy debates at CUT's rural department. The latter included calls for an 'Alternative Rural Development Project based on Family Farming and Agrarian Reform' (Bianchini, 2015).

²⁵² E.g. increasingly mechanised, integrated and concentrated agro-industrial sector; deregulation of labour contracts, precarisation of labour, and chronic unemployment; densification of rural-urban linkages leading to semi-proletarianisation and reduction of agricultural wages as primary source of income for rural populations.

²⁵³ Interview AR-SA1.

A process of social differentiation had occurred within the Southern Cone during the 1970s given that a minority fringe of more consolidated middle farmers accessed support policies. By the mid-1980s, however, these sources of support had all but dried up. Yet, in Brazil, CONTAG and CUT's participation in the 1987-88 Constituent Assembly launched a virtuous process that would enable them to consolidate their peasant and middle farmer base. Although the drive to create a strong legal framework for agrarian reform was largely defeated (Welch and Sauer, 2015), AOs secured the universalisation of social security regardless of previous contribution, enfranchising millions of rural workers for the first time (Delgado, 2005). The 1988 Constitution provided a fundamental social safety net indexed on the minimum wage for rural peasantries who had for the most part been excluded from any government support. It also determined the necessity of approving two central pieces of legislation in the following years: an *Agricultural Law* (8.171/91) and an *Agrarian Law* (8.629/93).

Hence, in the run up to the 1988 Constitution and after its approval, both CUT and CONTAG intensified internal debates, not only on agrarian reform and wage labour disputes, but also increasingly on agricultural policy. This allowed the main actors of Brazil's rural union movement to put forward the concept of *política agrícola diferenciada*, that is, a set of policy instruments tailored to the specificities of small and medium scale agriculture. Convincing authorities of the relevance of this endeavour required demonstrating its strategic importance. Hence CONTAG cited statistics regarding small-scale farmers' production of the bulk of Brazil's staple foods (cassava, beans, and maize in particular) and employment of most of its rural labour (70% at the time). Yet the new agricultural policies demanded by CONTAG and CUT required a precise enough definition of the targeted rural segment.

Both AOs laid down the premises for the criteria that would later become integral to Brazil's – and later South American neighbours – legal definitions of family farming. CONTAG and CUT's deliberations for the 1991 *Agricultural Law* yielded some key criteria. While both national rural unions agreed on family labour must be predominant on the farm, and that FF income should mostly be obtained from agricultural activities, they diverged on land size: CUT proposed a slightly larger cap (up to 5 fiscal modules) to include middle farmers, while CONTAG initially only focused on the smaller-scale farmers (up to 2 fiscal modules) (Grisa, 2012).

In a similar way to CONTAG in the 1960s (see chapter 3), internal debates within CUT questioned whether rural workers that held land property titles (no matter how small the plot) should be represented in the union, given that, according to some members, this would taint the coherence of rural labouring class representation. Others, nevertheless, won the argument by pointing out the unavoidable fact that "CUT's main rural bases and leaders were made up of small landowners in the South and North of the country" (Grisa, 2012:111). Hence, the wide understanding of rural labour enshrined at CONTAG's foundation in 1963 (i.e. including propertied small and medium farmers) was renewed by its competing younger union, CUT, in the late 1980s.²⁵⁴ Indeed, insofar as the labour used on the land emanated from the family itself, these farmers could be considered part of a wider rural labouring class. They simply differed from other rural workers to the extent that they owned a slightly bigger part of the factors of production. In the case of land, this usually happened to also be where they lived.

The *Agricultural Law* (1991) and *Agrarian Law* (1993) policy processes were dominated by entrepreneurial agriculture representatives, however, with little space for other actors. Yet the mere fact that the 1991 law acknowledged the need for *políticas diferenciadas* for small-scale producers was a breakthrough. Furthermore, CONTAG was also allocated two seats in a newly created National Agricultural Policy Council. But concessions from the dominant agribusiness lobby stopped there.²⁵⁵

Who to include mattered not only for AO representation purposes, but for the composition of invited spaces. Selection of interlocutors to speak with government – e.g. on public policies for family farming – was based on how representative their organisations were. Hence CONTAG was the main AO discussing the actual contours of the new *política diferenciada* for family farming with government officials:

A working group was created – resulting from CONTAG's pressure – in the ministry of agriculture [...]. This group must have met 10 times in the Ministry of Agriculture, with members of each region of Brazil, and with the sector from the Ministry of Agriculture [who used to work] in the old EMBRATER [former state rural extension agency] to create an agricultural *política diferenciada*. This is where PROVAPE²⁵⁶ was born. PROVAPE was the first specific public policy.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ This was partly also a consequence of CUT's competition with CONTAG for rural labouring class representation (see Favareto, 2006).

²⁵⁵ Interview AO-SA4.

²⁵⁶ *Programa de Valorização da Pequena Produção Rural* (Programme for Valuing Small Rural Production).

²⁵⁷ Interview AO-SA4.

The large-scale agribusiness-led CNA was not invited to negotiate the family farmer definition criteria. Yet CNA was still able to influence the Ministry of Agriculture on one criterion: allowing for the hiring of two permanent employees. CNA's legitimacy in pushing for this specific change was warranted by its own representative base, given that part of the middle farmers that fit into the newly agreed definition were affiliated to it.

At its 5th congress (1991), CONTAG created several secretariats, including one for agricultural policy. Its second director, Alberto Broch (see chapter 3)²⁵⁸ recalled:

In CONTAG I served two mandates as director of agricultural policy. In this period we strongly boosted the family farming issue on the scale of Brazil. Because this was a theme more related to the South of Brazil, more to Rio Grande do Sul. The North, the Northeast used to work more on the issue of the wage labourer, the issue of agrarian reform.

This congress witnessed a CONTAG/CUT approximation (two of the seven directors of CONTAG's elected governing board were CUT members) and CONTAG's decision to officially incorporate the term 'family farming' (Teixeira, 2018). As a senior CONTAG advisor recalled:

It's exactly during this period [...] that the mini and small producer came to be known as family farmer, or farmer of family base. And how did CONTAG characterize this family farmer? Through great discussions, regional encounters, in this [CUT/CONTAG] project, where we discussed 'how do we characterize, how do we identify this family farmer? So it was first the land factor, second the labour force, third this question of the existence of occasional [hired] labour, [fourth] residing in the property or not, and [fifth] his objective [sources of] income. So these factors determined, and characterized family farming.'²⁵⁹

Though the idea of *políticas diferenciadas* emerged from CUT/CONTAG-government debates, the name of the new beneficiaries was derived from debates within academia. Through international comparative historical analysis, two influential publications – José Eli da Veiga's *Agricultural Development: A Historical Vision* (1991)²⁶⁰ and Ricardo Abramovay's *Paradigms of Agricultural Capitalism in Question* (1992)²⁶¹ – showed how capitalist development in industrialised countries had relied on a specific yet overlooked social rural actor. As another Brazilian researcher who was partly influenced by the above authors put it:

When you look at the development of the more advanced capitalist countries, you had the predominance of a type of agriculture, which was neither the old peasantry, nor the large holdings based on wage labour

²⁵⁸ Interview AO-SA5.

²⁵⁹ Interview AO-SA5.

²⁶⁰ *O Desenvolvimento Agrícola - Uma Visão Histórica*.

²⁶¹ *Paradigmas do Capitalismo Agrário em Questão*.

[...]. It is something that theory had never predicted, a modern agriculture which nevertheless remained organised under a family base (as was the old peasantry).²⁶²

In the above-described Brazilian 1990s context putting the hitherto obscure category of 'family farming' under a favourable light with the legitimacy of academia's scientific rigour fit like a glove for the aspirations of the small and medium farmer of Brazil's South. Until then, under the prevailing designation of 'small producer', this agricultural segment was often considered in government circles as ultimately incapable of producing in sufficient quantities and thus perceived as a burden for the rest of society (or at best, a reserve army of labour for cheap employment). It was now being revealed by respected scholars as a crucial pillar for successful development.

There was hardly any dialogue space for smaller-scale farmer organisations in MERCOSUR negotiations. But discussions at national level yielded a 'Technical Commission of the Small Producer' which at least on paper reflected the rural union policy priorities of the time revolving around access to rural financial services, including subsidized interest rates, insurance, and "specific [credit] lines for reconversion/diversification for products impacted by MERCOSUR" (Bianchini, 2015:24). Meanwhile, CUT-linked Southern unions advised by researchers at the Socio-Economic Department of Rural Studies (DESER)²⁶³ held a seminar entitled "Investment Credit - a struggle worth millions of lives". Participants agreed that access to credit would be the key plank for rural unions, from which other policies enabling a restructuring of the family farming sector would be built, including to enable competition with farmers from MERCOSUR countries (Bianchini, 2015). Moreover, access to credit was an attractive policy plank because it could provide visible and immediate results to CONTAG-CUT support bases eager to see concrete demonstrations of their leaders' intense involvement in policy negotiations with legislative and executive branches in Brasília (Grisa, 2012).

1994 saw a particularly unique convergence between AO mobilisation and consolidation of academic debate, which created favourable conditions within government to create Brazil's first specific policy for family farming. Besides Brazil's South, during the 1980s the rural union movement had also been reinvigorated in the country's Northern macro-region (corresponding

²⁶² Interview AR-SA1.

²⁶³ *Departamento Socioeconômico de Estudos Rurais*.

to most of the Amazon rainforest biome), where the specific production forms of traditional peoples and communities, as well as peasants who had migrated to the region in past decades also went beyond the national confederation's prior focus on agrarian reform or workers' rights. Their mobilisation campaigns entitled *Grito da Amazônia*²⁶⁴ inspired the wider rural union movement to conduct what would become CONTAG's nationwide annual *Grito da Terra*²⁶⁵ mobilisations. The first two of these (1994 and 1995) included CUT and the MST, as did the first COPROFAM meetings, also held from 1994 onwards.²⁶⁶ As recalled by a senior CONTAG leader:

[For the] Second *Grito da Terra Brasil*, in 1996, CONTAG did a large national mobilisation, [...] occupied the Ministry of Planning and Budget [...], put turkeys on the table, brought pigs, chickens, inside the ministry. And in a few days CONTAG was sued, had to pay, indemnify. Years of judicial processes, and CONTAG was held responsible for this occupation. But it was very memorable, because it was exactly on this year that CONTAG pulled off decree nº 1.946 of 1996 which creates the National Programme for the Strengthening of Family Farming, PRONAF.²⁶⁷

The strength of an agrarian united front and consolidated list of academia-backed policy demands prompted a credit programme specifically tailored for 'small rural production' (PROVAPE in 1994), and PRONAF (1996). PRONAF criteria were listed in a Brazilian Central Bank (BACEN) 1995 resolution (in Bianchini 2015:25-26, emphases added):

BACEN Resolution 2191 of 24 August 1995 instituted the rural credit [chapter] of the National Programme for the Strengthening of Family Farming (PRONAF) and defined the following criteria for the Declaração de Aptidão (DAP) [PRONAF Eligibility Declaration]:

- a) *uses land* parcel as owner, *posseiro* [informal tenure], land-leaser or partner;
- b) does *not maintain a permanent employee*. Occasionally resorting to the help of third parties will be admitted, when the seasonal nature of the agricultural activity justifies it;
- c) does not possess in any type of [land] title, an area superior to *four 'Módulos Fiscais'*²⁶⁸;
- d) a minimum of 80% of his/her gross annual *income* results from agricultural or collector activities;
- e) *lives* in the property or in a close urban or rural settlement.

As formulated in criterion 'b)' above, hiring temporary employees, for instance to undertake seasonal work, does not necessarily preclude the basic principle of *predominance* of family labour. Yet, the exact conditions under which a farm may employ additional (non-family) labour and still be considered a family farm was the subject of heated debates in Brazil (Bianchini,

²⁶⁴ Cry of the Amazon.

²⁶⁵ Cry of the Land.

²⁶⁶ Interview AO-SA4.

²⁶⁷ Interview AO-SA5.

²⁶⁸ 'Fiscal module', a Brazilian land measuring unit whose size varies according to different parts of the country's territory, based on the minimum land plot size required to make production viable (see 6.1.2).

2015), as in the previously mentioned concession made to CNA on hired labour. Hence, "On the first, second year of PRONAF, CONTAG itself, mainly its bases in the Northeast defended the criterion of family farming without employees".²⁶⁹ The Northeastern CONTAG federations position reflects the social formation of its bases; that is, either small-scale peasants who seldom employ non-family labour, or agricultural wage labourers who do not farm their own land. Consequently, as highlighted by Selwyn's (2012:95) study of CONTAG-affiliated rural unions in the Northeastern São Francisco river valley, local unions in Brazil's Northeast have often mobilized to defend wage labourers' interests "employed by large and medium producers, while effectively sidelining wage workers employed by small producers", even when these are also members of CONTAG-affiliated rural labour unions.

Conversely, in Brazil's South, most of CONTAG's base is made up of small/medium family farmers with access to land, and agricultural wage labourers are not nearly as strong a constituency as in the Northeast.²⁷⁰ A first compromise allowed for the hiring of up to two permanent employees, ensuring that most labour still originated from the family (Bianchini, 2015). Eventually, "from 97, 98, the South ended up winning, [leading to adoption of] the concept of *predominance* of family labour [emphasis added]".²⁷¹ This more flexible criterion ended up allowing the hiring of as many employees as there are family members, "so if a family has eight people, you can have eight employees."²⁷²

The consolidation of the family farming concept from the late 1990s throughout Brazil occurred chiefly through the PRONAF Infrastructure programme. This was a variant of PRONAF destined primarily to investments in community infrastructure and training, which ended up channelled primarily to poorer municipalities.²⁷³ As observed by Veiga and Abramovay in 1998 (cited by Leite et al., 2007:50), "credit operations are concentrated in municipalities with highest HDIs and infrastructure loans in the poorest".

²⁶⁹ Interview CS-SA24.

²⁷⁰ Interview AO-SA4.

²⁷¹ Interview CS-SA24 .

²⁷² Interview CS-SA24 .

²⁷³ See Leite et al., 2007:50.

The spread of local rural development councils nonetheless became a CONTAG strategy. Over 2300 Municipal Councils for Sustainable Rural Development (CMDR)²⁷⁴ were created, enabling some channelling of state resources, promoting discussion of local sustainable development projects, and training of CUT-CONTAG cadres to participate:

We would say: we need to make [people in the] North, South, East and West [of Brazil] speak of family farming, this new name, this new actor of the countryside who practices an agriculture which is not recognized by government, or by society. So we adopted the following [strategy], the so-called PRONAF Infrastructure [programme]. [...] Here was a programme that destined infrastructure resources to the local, municipal level. Who would get this? The municipal mayors. But what was the condition? You had to create a Municipal Council of Agriculture and Sustainable Rural Development. [...] This council had to be half represented by family farmers (president of the union, community leaders, of the municipality) and the other half could be of the public power (local judiciary, city councillors, the mayor and others that he managed to include). [...] This started in 96, 97, 98. In 99 to 2000, thousands of municipal councils were created. These municipal councils discussed which demands existed in the municipality, what were the needs, and they elected the priority for that year. And the municipality received an amount which the council – with the mayor, the city council, the president of the cooperative, the priest – would take [...] and invest.²⁷⁵

CMDRs were often captured by local powers' agendas, but they did spread the term family farming consolidating the idea that this was a specific type of agriculture, contrary to the agribusiness lobby's discourse that there was "only one agriculture".²⁷⁶ Moreover CMDRs became a training ground for thousands of CONTAG-affiliated local union leaders in policy dialogue and influence.

By the late 1990s, PRONAF delivered an average of 900.000 loan contracts per year, and would reach up to 2.5 million contracts for the 2005-2006 crop year (Bianchini, 2015). PRONAF eventually yielded a comprehensive set of public policies encompassing, among others, insurance, technical assistance and rural extension, and public procurement of food from family farmers. Nevertheless, despite expansion efforts, credit lines remained concentrated in the dynamic middle farmer strongholds of Brazil's three Southern states and the South-eastern state of Minas Gerais. These still accounted for 93% of family farming contracts and resources (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, animal feed, etc.) two decades on (Bianchini, 2015:95-96).²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ *Conselho Municipal de Desenvolvimento Rural.*

²⁷⁵ Interview AO-SA5.

²⁷⁶ Interview AO-SA5.

²⁷⁷ Numbers are from the 2014/2015 crop year.

The North-eastern states, which house half of Brazil's family farmers, predominantly of a smaller-scale peasant base, were mostly left out of the above credit lines. This largely reflected the public policy's dependency on the national banking system. Despite treasury-backed subsidies and guarantees, and the predominant deployment of credit through state banks, the latter's profit maximisation logic and aversion to risk continuously translated into a reluctance to engage in painstaking lending to a larger number of smaller-scale peasants of the semi-arid Northeast (with limited return on investment), as opposed to the expedited lending to a smaller number of dynamic middle farmers in the subtropical Southeast or temperate South, yielding higher returns for the banks.²⁷⁸ Other policies were nonetheless created for the Northeast peasantries and the North's indigenous, forestry, and riverine traditional communities, also technically within the umbrella of 'family farming', besides other less consolidated PFFs in the remaining regions of Brazil.

This subsection has looked at the regional process through which COPROFAM and its national member organisations came to represent their diverse membership base through the self-identification term 'family farming' in the 1990s, to which 'peasant and indigenous' was added in the 2000s. The two countries in which national agrarian representation combined the small/middle family farmer and peasant identities into a single socio-economic policy category encompassing diverse types of self-managed rural labourers - Chile and Brazil - were the ones where a new collective rural subject, the family farmer, gained political recognition as an actor in its own right (substituting urban-centred employer-worker negotiations by territorially-centred state-family farmer policy dialogue).

In Argentina/Uruguay (where the small/medium producer identity predominated) and Paraguay (where peasant identities were strongest) AOs lacked a sufficiently wide *and* united base to compel states into negotiating a set of specific institutions and policies for family farming. This would change in the 2000s-2010s, after REAF/MERCOSUR's official recognition of family farming with commonly applicable criteria, would Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay begin creating their own national policy instruments to support PFF, as discussed below.

²⁷⁸ Interview CS-SA22

6.1.2 Regional policy criteria: legally defining family farming in the Southern Cone

Often cited as one of REAF's milestones, its jointly formulated 'Guidelines for the Recognition and Identification of Family Farming in MERCOSUR', were approved in 2007 by the regional bloc's highest governing instance (and are usually referred to by its participants) as Resolution 25/07 (RES 25/07). This regional policy process built upon Brazil's (and to a lesser extent Chile's) state-sanctioned 1990s experiences, and national participatory processes initiated following the creation of the regional invited space from 2004, in Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay. The constant iteration between regional and national policy formulation dialogues, enabled by the co-existence of REAF regional and national sections, and involving a core of AO leaders and government representatives at both scales, led to common agreement on RES 25/07's three criteria to recognise family farming in MERCOSUR countries: i) predominance of family labour, ii) on-farm management by the family, and iii) compatibility of productive resources with family labour capacity, developed activities, and utilised technology. The third criterion is of particular interest, as it reflected a painstakingly negotiated compromise that enabled to incorporate very diverse realities across neighbouring countries, including by avoiding putting a quantified land size cap on family farms.

Although in neighbouring countries, organisations and academia sometimes referred to 'family producers' or 'family farmers', there was no official written definition agreed upon, let alone validated by official legislation. There had been studies proposing different, partly overlapping definitions and typologies of family farming since the early 1990s, often linked to IFAD- and WB-funded rural development projects focused on small-scale farming (Obschatko, 2002; Oyhançabal, 2013). There was no consensus as to which definition or typology would prevail, given that there had not been a perceived need to differentiate agricultural policies according to size and levels of capitalisation, and therefore there were as of yet no negotiated or institutionalised public policies aimed at family farmers on a national scale. It was the REAF regional policy process that first drove actors to define family farming in each national section, and later adopt common regional criteria, from which each country could subsequently derive more specific national criteria.

In REAF early meetings, once the mechanisms under which participation would take place had been established and accepted by all member countries (see chapter 3), delegations began debating the need to tailor both national support and regional trade policies to the family farming sector. Potential special treatment of family farming at MERCOSUR level meant each country had to have its own nationally agreed definition of family farming. Moreover, neighbouring countries' definitions should be compatible with each other and mutually recognized (REAF/MERCOSUR, 2016). At the III REAF held in Asunción in May 2005, delegations agreed on commissioning studies on the economic weight of family farming in MERCOSUR, as well as on country-level applicable legal frameworks (Niederle, 2016). However, what was initially presented as an instrument for the harmonisation of intra-MERCOSUR trade (see chapter 7) - the family farmer registries - eventually became an essential tool for national policies.

The first two criteria, respectively predominance of family labour and collective self-management resolved the labourer-versus-employer representation discrepancies between COPROFAM's national AOs (see 6.1.1) by creating a new collective subject that shares characteristics with both but is also distinct from either one. This newly defined collective subject thus became entitled to negotiate public policies directly with the state. Debates on the third criterion, regarding family farmers' maximum capitalisation levels, proved too conflicting to resolve through quantitatively defined ceilings. Thus, resolution 25/07's wording resorted to the idea of 'compatibility of resources with labour capacity' of the family farm.

Criterios comunes para definir la Agricultura Familiar



Figure 16: *Illustration of the three criteria adopted in MERCOSUR's GMC Resolution 25/07 (Source: REAF, 2016).*²⁷⁹

This enabled to surpass intractable discussions on land size ceilings (given the wide variation of social reproduction conditions across and within single countries) by delegating their delimitation to each country. Hence, agreeing on social and economic criteria with Southern Cone state authorities to define family farming at regional level enabled COPROFAM to: i) create a wide enough alliance between diverse rural labouring class fractions by maintaining unity in diversity of AO representation; and ii) build this unity through the common denominator of self-managed

²⁷⁹ Text Translation:

-upper left corner: 'What for? -Implementing specific policies, - promote trade';

-upper right corner: 'Family Labour. The occupied labour force is predominantly the family's (limit to number of hired workers);

-lower left corner: 'Family responsible for production. Residency in or close to farm. The family is responsible for production and agro-pastoral activities. It lives in the farm or in a close location'

-lower right corner: 'Productive resources compatible with labour. The productive resources will be compatible with the family's working capacity, with the developed activity, and the utilized technology, in accordance with the reality of each country'.

family labour to differentiate it from large-scale agribusiness, and thus recognise family farming as a specific public at the regional level.

Brazil and Chile's previously existing family farmer registries both used a land criterion that incorporated several variables, beyond only area size. Brazil's *módulo fiscal* (fiscal module) is a variable area unit dating from the 1970s, determined locally in each municipality (ranging from 5 to 110 ha) according to several criteria including economic viability, biomes, and conservation zones. Chile's *hectárea de riego básico* (basic irrigation hectare) is also a variable measure based on climate and soil conditions and productive potential of each region, and was created as part of the 1960s' redistributive agrarian reform. Updated in 1990 legislation, Chile's definition of *pequeño productor* (small producer) caps it at 12 HRBs (which can represent up to 750 ha), while Brazil's 1993 *Agrarian Law* defines the *pequena propriedade* (small property) at a maximum of 4 fiscal modules (which can go up to 440 ha), also used in PRONAF's eligibility criteria at its creation in 1996.

Brazil's land size criteria was hotly debated by AOs. Many development projects used a standard 50 ha limit, others associated family farming only with the *minifundio* (under 1 MF, while an influential FAO/INCRA 1994 report included medium farmers (up to 15 MF). CONTAG had a crucial role here, as recalled by CONTAG former president Francisco Urbano:

We started discussing [...]: we need to regulate the agrarian law: what is a small property, what is a medium property? For agrarian reform. I spent two days, three days, calling every state [CONTAG federation], asking: what is a [fiscal] module in your property, what are four modules in your region? We started to understand that 4 modules was the ideal to [define] the small property, and the medium [from] 4 to 15 modules.

Indeed, the 4 MF limit was large enough to include most of Brazil's family farmers from a wide diversity of agro-ecological conditions, simultaneously differentiating them from large-scale agribusiness. However, apart from Chile, neighbouring countries had not instituted variable plot size unit measures accounting for differences in climate, soil, and other productivity-related criteria.

This generated debates in the run up to agreement on the wording of RES 25/07 in REAF. Indeed, given the wide diversity of FF in the region, land size and capitalisation are not necessarily correlated. For instance, in Argentina, as explained by a former civil servant at its Ministry of Agriculture, "if you look, between a *minifundista* from Jujuy, who may have 4 ha of maize, and a sheep's wool producer in Patagonia who may have 1100 ha and is poorer than the one who has

4 ha, there are huge differences".²⁸⁰ Similarly, in Uruguay, "I can be a smallholder, and have 20 hothouses. And have 50 day-labourers in the hothouses. So I'm small according to land size. But I'm not small [in scale of operation]. And you can have a guy who has 200 ha on hard dry land rearing sheep",²⁸¹ who can barely make ends meet. Such examples underscore the geographical diversity of the FF segment, and the difficulty of agreeing on a single land size measure, even within one country, let alone at the regional scale.

An alternative generic formulation was eventually agreed upon. The carefully and painstakingly negotiated language of RES 25/07 offered to resolve the regional land size disparity issue without explicitly putting a size limit on landholding.²⁸² Instead it resorted to other attributes of agricultural scale (productive resources, activity, technology) and their compatibility with family labour capacity. Ultimately, debates representing the region's wide diversity of family farming systems revealed how land size is a necessary but insufficient criterion to ascertain the amount of productive resources that can be self-managed by families working the land with their own labour.

The case of Paraguay is equally revealing of the power of regional intersubjective debate between AOs, civil servants, technicians, and academics in providing member countries with public policy instruments that reflect the internal diversity of FF - not just at the scale of the Southern Cone, but within each national territory. Paraguay was, along with Chile, the only other country besides Brazil equipped with legislation defining its FF sector when REAF was created in 2004. Yet, while Paraguay's *Law 2419/04* (which gave birth to its land institute INDERT) defined peasant family farming (in its article 6) through the predominance of family labour, it did not adopt specific quantified criteria. This changed with REAF's policy process in the run up to RES 25/07. A Paraguayan civil servant explained:

For the characterisation of family farming, several workshops were organised, where the organisations were convened to establish what the parameters would be. [...] There wasn't yet the [REAF 25/07] resolution, it was still being worked on. [...] So what had to be done was the characterisation of family farming and decide what were going to be the [criteria]. [...] We had to work on the issue of land size. The issue of the family unit: who they could be? How many people could work during the year [as seasonal

²⁸⁰ Interview CS-SA8.

²⁸¹ Interview CS-SA9.

²⁸² Interview CS-SA8.

employees]? How much income? And this took [...] three or four workshops [...] with space for civil society. It was very interesting – a milestone of work in common to determine this characterisation.²⁸³

Policy targeting in Paraguay prior to REAF discussions occurred through INDERT's classifications of small producer in a restrictive form, through a 5 ha national land size cap that excluded its middle family farmers, thus stripping the wider rural labouring classes of policy segment unity. Paraguay's REAF national section discussed the issue at length and aimed to rectify it by proposing a new definition that contemplated middle family farmers, adapting the land size criterion to the country's territorial diversity. Though not approved into law, Paraguay's REAF national section adopted an official definition that enlarged the land size cap to "50 hectares of land in the Oriental Region and 500 ha in the Chaco" (COPROFAM, 2018:7). The territorially-based differences in land size caps reflected the fact that the north-western Chaco is much less densely populated and has climatic and soil conditions that are considerably different from those of Paraguay's south-eastern half. Hence:

One of the big discussions was on the size of the land, of the farm. [...] The only legal framework that we have is the INDERT law [...] INDERT works with settlements; the producers questioned it because usually one would work on the basis of at least 10 ha. [Regarding the size], we would get into a great dilemma, because within the group, there were also small soya producers. And so, since it was an extensive culture, there had to be an agreement on up to how many hectares a family can manage. [...] They may produce soya or they may focus on small cattle herding. Which is also extensive. Or milk production. [...].²⁸⁴

REAF national sections thus drew lessons from regional debates on the territorial variability of FF and endeavoured to apply these nationally, even if they did not always prevail at formulating new pieces of legislation. Discussions inside REAF during its first years thus contributed to help define who was and who wasn't a family farmer in each of the region's countries.

This section has shown how COPROFAM representatives' participation in invited spaces between the 1990s and 2010s resulted in the legal recognition of its social base as family farmers. This identity allowed to group together various rural labouring segments into single AOs, which in turn successfully petitioned governments for the creation of tailored invited spaces and policies in MERCOSUR and its member countries. The mere creation at scale of these specific

²⁸³ Interview CS-SA16.

²⁸⁴ Interview CS-SA16.

policies for FF rowed against the current of agricultural policy orthodoxy, and faced opposition from large-scale agribusiness lobbies. The latter considered most of COPROFAM's members as structurally incapable of productive dynamism and therefore only eligible for compensatory social policies.

COPROFAM members' self-identification as *peasant and indigenous family farmers* became a discursive frame uniting a wide diversity of rural peoples under one representative banner, and thereby defined their requested policies' public. Legal definitions distinguished this public from large-scale agribusiness, given that the former work the land as self-managed units of family labour, whereas the latter manage their own farms but hire outside labourers.

The reaching of agreement on common regional criteria to define family farming was no simple task. It involved multiple AO meetings with national governments, as well as dozens of regional discussions over several years. The originality of each national process reflected not only its singular agrarian and political trajectories, but also the conditions of political and policy dialogue in national invited spaces, the so-called REAF National Sections. Further discussions at the regional level sometimes revealed strong differences between different conceptions of family farming across the Southern Cone. Reaching regional-level agreement despite these divergent visions was achieved in different ways, identifiable in: i) which criteria were chosen, and which were left out; ii) how the criteria were formulated to both encapsulate a diverse sector and clearly distinguish it from large-scale agribusiness; and iii) how their formulation was specific enough to achieve this, but also wide enough to enable different national definitions to fit within broader regional parameters.

6.2 Legal recognition of the family farm and agricultural professions in West Africa

6.2.1 Recognising family farming in Senegal and ECOWAS agricultural policies

This subsection shows how the creation and growth of ROPPA over three decades (1990s-2010s) has run in tandem with the recognition of family farming by state authorities as a political actor to be reckoned with on all significant agrarian policy matters, at regional and national levels. As seen in chapter 4, Sahel countries' national platforms built during the 1990s are composed of

diverse rural labouring class fractions (e.g. semi-proletarianised, pluriactive peasantries, seasonal migrating workers, pastoralists, or more capitalised family farmers linked to commodity chains). These different groups, that most frequently self-identify under either the *peasants* or *agricultural producers*²⁸⁵ umbrella discursive frames, have joined forces behind the banners of peasant family farming (*agriculture familiale paysanne*) and family farms (*exploitations familiales*). From public invisibility to regular presidential and ministerial meetings in the late 1990s in Senegal (and other UEMOA member countries by the 2000s), the Sahel and savannah's peasant majorities scored significant policy victories in Senegal in the late 1990s, including debt pardons, lower interest rate loans, and the maintenance of the national rural extension agency in state hands (Faye, 2007).

One must look at both the regional West African and national Senegalese contexts in the early 2000s to understand how ROPPA and CNCR's strategies combined to enable institutional advances towards the recognition of family farming in agricultural policy. As regional integration processes intensified and UEMOA and ECOWAS addressed agricultural policy at the highest regional political level (see chapter 4), national government administrations felt the pressure to correspond, at least in official rhetoric, if not in concrete budget allocations. According to CNCR President Nadjirou Sall, besides the resilience and continuing prevalence of Senegalese FF, it was also the unequivocal inclusion of FF as a central actor of ECOWAS's regional agricultural policy that facilitated greater acceptance of debates on stimulating smaller-scale agriculture in Senegal.²⁸⁶

Given its previously close contacts with president Diouf's government in the 1990s, CNCR's relationship with president Abdoulaye Wade's administration (2000-2012) was fraught with tensions from his first year in office. Nonetheless, negotiations were under way by 2002. Deadlock was broken after an imposing demonstration of force by CNCR, when on 26 January 2003 over 20,000 members rallied at Dakar's Senghor Stadium, and invited government members to attend. A then-published manifesto demanded the drafting of an Agricultural Policy Framework Law (*Loi d'Orientation Agricole*).²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Represented respectively by the letters *P(aysans)* and *P(roducteurs) A(gricoles)* in the ROPPA acronym.

²⁸⁶ Interview AO-WA11.

²⁸⁷ Interview AO-WA8.

Thereafter, the government publicised a draft bill, opening it up for civil society contributions. The first version was skewed in favour of commercial agricultural enterprises, but after CNCR gathered its governing board, it requested and obtained additional time from government authorities, and undertook consultations with its bases. For 3 months, workshops involving around 3,000 peasants in villages across the country's different regions and the main *filières*,²⁸⁸ and concluding with a national encounter, led to the drafting of an alternate bill presented by CNCR to the Ministry of Agriculture.

The ministry created a committee with key government institutions linked to agricultural policy and CNCR, where all parties negotiated a final version incorporating most of CNCR's proposals (McSween, 2015). The alternate draft proposal represented "almost 80% of the LOASP that you see now", according to one of the AOs technical advisors.²⁸⁹ A comprehensive framework for Senegal's agricultural policies for 20 years, LOASP was adopted by the National Assembly on 27 May, and promulgated on 4 June 2004.²⁹⁰ Like ECOWAP/CAADP's subsequent reflection of ROPPA's main demands (see chapter 4), LOASP's final CNCR-influenced version put FF at the heart of Senegal's agricultural strategy (see following subsection 6.2.2) and set food sovereignty as its primary objective.

Unlike former president Abdou Diouf (1981-2000), presidents Abdoulaye Wade (2000-2012) and Macky Sall (2013-present day) and respective liberal parties did not open space to dialogue in Senegal's 2000-2020 period. Yet CNCR had garnered enough political strength by then to become the country's main AO. It refused to be misrepresented as an urban-type labour union (despite Wade's efforts) or as a member of a proposed *Chambre d'Agriculture* (see chapter 4).

Yet West African agricultural policy framework laws are the result of ROPPA national platform negotiations with states that are built to disproportionately serve national urban ruling class interests. Hence, despite its incorporation of most CNCR demands, Senegal's LOASP has been described by critics on the left (Ndiaye, 2012) as essentially a first milestone in president Wade government's (2000-2012) to focus almost exclusively on large-scale agribusiness

²⁸⁸ Specific commodity production, processing, and distribution chains.

²⁸⁹ Interview AO-WA8.

²⁹⁰ Interview CS-WA5/CS-WA7.

investments supported by the Senegalese state. Wade's vision would be explicitly laid out a few years later in his GOANA programme launched after the 2008 food crisis.

After it was adopted in 2005 at the 28th ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State, ECOWAP's merging with the CAADP process connected it to further formulation and implementation processes. In 2003, AU Heads of State had agreed to the Maputo Declaration and launched CAADP, the operationalisation of which involved AU countries' formulation of CAADP 'compacts' and 'investment plans'. These only materialised after the 2007-2008 food price crisis put agriculture and food security back at the top of African policymakers' agenda. In West Africa, Heads of State adopted the 'Regional Initiative for Food Production and Fight Against Hunger' in June 2008, and ECOWAS decided to formulate a CAADP 'regional compact' – the only AU Regional Economic Community (REC) to do so. The resulting ECOWAP/CAADP compact signed in Abuja in November 2009 included ROPPA as one of its seven signatories and incorporated its prioritisation of family farms and food sovereignty. Its correspondent Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP) for the 2011-2015 period, first presented in Dakar on June 2010, cited 'producer organisations' as one of its key implementing partners, and ROPPA as the implementing organisation for three of its planned actions. ROPPA was also given a seat in the newly created Consultative Committee for Agriculture and Food (CCAF) (Afun-Ogidan et al., 2012).

Despite the gradual gains in mutual trust and working collaboration between ROPPA and ECOWAS representatives throughout ECOWAP/CAADP formulation, the same could not be said of the equivalent processes in most of the region's countries. The formulation of CAADP's corresponding National Investment Plans (NAIP) was generally much less inclusive than its regional counterpart process. AOs' participation, which had been financed by the ECOWAS commission for ECOWAP/CAADP, was not made available for national level investment plan consultations. Mali's CNOP leader Ibrahima Coulibaly summarised: "states have tried to marginalise [AOs] in many countries. They have chosen malleable producer organisations, sidelining those that have ideas and capacities to influence the process" (Coulibaly, 2012:1). Even in Senegal, where CNCR had a relatively strong position, it did not get as much consultative and policy formulating space as ROPPA had in ECOWAS. Rather, president Wade's Liberal Party administration actively sought to divide the national peasant movement, including by fomenting

the creation of parallel AOs to undermine CNCR's near-monopoly of Senegalese peasant representation.²⁹¹

ROPPIA's policy dialogue spaces at ECOWAS-level remained open to participation after the ECOWAP/CAADP policy process, during elaboration of RAIP, signed in June 2010. After the ECOWAS policy process was merged with that of the African Union NEPAD's CAADP, the more participatory ECOWAP elaboration methodology was maintained for the regional investment plan. Conversely, the more technocratic, government-centred, CAADP process (based on macroeconomic modelling to identify sectors that contribute most to poverty reduction and economic growth) was usually the norm for NAIPs (Benkhala, Dièye, 2010).

Yet even the more participatory ECOWAP implementation process was fraught with limitations, among which: i) an overlap of many international donor initiatives that all claimed to be in sync with ECOWAP but hardly ever committed funds to ensure proper coordination between each other or with ECOWAP; ii) downgrading agricultural policy in the face of other ECOWAS budgetary priorities, notably peace and security issues; iii) general institutional and resource constraints (despite arguably being the most densely integrated REC) (Inter-Réseaux, 2016).

Following adoption of the 'Regional Initiative for the Production of Food and Fight Against Hunger' by ECOWAS Heads of State after the 2008 food price crisis, the regional agricultural policy was reoriented towards three main axes: i) increasing food production, ii) facilitating trade, and iii) providing access to food for vulnerable populations. In the RAIP document signed in June 2010, proposed budgetary allocations reflected a prioritisation of the first of these three mobilizing programmes, and within it, of that programme's first component, that is, the "promotion of food products leading to food sovereignty: rice, maize and cassava" (ECOWAS, 2010b:15). The first listed activity of this component (1.1.1), for its part, was phrased as a "support to the *modernisation of family farms* and intensification of production systems [emphasis added]" (*Ibid*:28). Thus not only did initial implementation efforts clearly underscore the oft-stated link between support to family farming and achievement of food sovereignty; they

²⁹¹ These included 3P- *Paysans*, *Pasteurs*, *Pêcheurs*, *Japando*, *Confédération Paysanne*, and *Force Paysanne*. (Interviews CS-WA5 and CS-WA7).

also equated the formal recognition of family farming stated in the strategy documents with support for its *modernisation*. This would later prove to be a double-edged sword for ROPPA's leadership, since it meant a desirable strengthening of family farmers' economic capabilities, but often at the expense of undermining their social, environmental, and cultural functions, and indeed putting at risk the survival of smaller-scale family farms²⁹².

Besides RAIP's confirmed commitment to ROPPA's policy vision originally outlined in ECOWAP five years earlier, several key institutions were to be created to implement the regional agricultural policy: a Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF), headquartered in Lomé, Togo and inaugurated in 2013; a Consultative Committee for Agriculture and Food (CCAF), which has met on many occasions (sometimes in Abuja, but usually in the country that holds the ECOWAS rotating presidency)²⁹³; and a regional fund hosted by the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), which has yet to be operationalised. ECOWAP implementation has thus yielded a recurring regional invited space, CCAF, in which ROPPA is represented, alongside regional institutions, member states, private sector, donors, and members of the ECOWAS Parliament.

While this has enabled ROPPA to maintain an influential regional policy profile, it has occurred within an environment of constrained budgetary resources, in which policy coordination is severely hampered by dependency on external funding, resulting in a myriad of often disconnected or overlapping short-term and geographically circumscribed programmes. Moreover, a study conducted by ROPPA and the two main regional West African pastoralist networks (RBM and APESS) concluded that only about a tenth of the credit available for agriculture throughout the West African region targeted PFFs, while other reports highlight how most budgetary resources target fewer larger-scale agricultural projects (Inter-Réseaux, 2016).

Though ECOWAP succeeded in attracting the attention of agricultural policymakers on FF's importance, and the 2008 food price crisis on their role as food suppliers in the region, the ways in which policymakers attempted to address challenges exposed unresolved dilemmas.

²⁹² Interview AO-WA10.

²⁹³ Interview CS-WA9.

Indeed, after recognising past decades of neglect and disdain, the question posed was no longer *why* support FF, but *how* to do so, explained ROPPA's Executive Secretary.²⁹⁴

The discourse on family farm 'modernisation' which characterised ECOWAP was initially seen as a victory for at least part of the peasant movement leadership, insofar as it represented potential access to forms of support (subsidies, credit, insurance, extension services, access to markets) that had only been precariously available to most smaller-scale farmers, especially since the post-1980s dismantling of state agricultural policy levers. Nevertheless, 'modernisation' in practice often became equated with simply making agricultural enterprises out of family farms, disregarding their economic, social, environmental and cultural specificities. At the other end of the political spectrum, the predominant neoliberal recipe for rural development disseminated in the 1980s-1990s (consisting in seeing family farmers as mere beneficiaries of social compensatory measures) also persisted to a large extent, with only larger agricultural enterprises considered desirable recipients of productive investment (Inter-Réseaux, 2016).²⁹⁵

The permanence of these predominant policy paradigms, whether developmentalist or neoliberal, posed a challenge to ROPPA members in terms of how to reconcile their own strategic policy vision *beyond* those paradigms, with immediate pressing needs and existing resource constraints *within* them. Some of the policy proposals of ROPPA national members in Agricultural Orientation Laws of West African countries (examined in subsection 6.2.2 below) are illustrative of the innovative ways in which their policy deliberations across the region have attempted to tread this balance.

6.2.2 Diffusing legal recognition of the family farm across UEMOA countries

This subsection examines how ROPPA platforms' agricultural policy visions laid out in the *lois d'orientation agricole* (agricultural policy framework laws) that they considerably contributed to shape (in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire, the four countries where laws were approved in the 2000s-2010s) reflect at least three policy planks revolving around the recognition of self-managed rural labouring classes: i) *agrarian organisations* as legitimate representatives of

²⁹⁴ Interview AO-WA11.

²⁹⁵ Interviews AO-WA10, AO-WA11 and AO-WA9.

peasants, pastoralists, fisherfolk, women, youth, commodity producers among others; ii) *family farms* as self-managed collective rural labouring units entitled to specifically-designed public policies; iii) the *professions* of peasants, producers, and agricultural wage labourers, entitling them to economic and social labouring rights hitherto reserved to urban labour.

Difficulties in influencing CAADP national investment plans, inconsistencies between their different lines of action, and their variable importance within national governments' policy agendas exposed the fragilities of over-relying on the ECOWAP/CAADP regional-national relationship as an effective strategy (Coulibaly, 2012). Nonetheless, the ECOWAP implementation process, as well as other regional meetings convened by UEMOA or CILSS, provided opportunities for members to exchange perceptions on alternative avenues to explore. When ECOWAP was approved in 2005, ROPPA members believed that Senegal's LOASP (2004) best addressed how to effectively translate this newly gained recognition of FF into specifically adapted policy frameworks. As the leader of Mali's CNOP Ibrahima Coulibaly put it:

Senegal had elaborated its agricultural orientation law before Mali [...]. Then you had the ECOWAP process in 2005 [...]. So this means that throughout all ROPPA countries, there is a will to obtain the recognition of family farming – that is, it was one of the engines. One must recognize the substratum of all this – because ROPPA was born in 2000. And we were a founding member of ROPPA. So most of the strong political messages went through this channel. Because ROPPA defended a robust, protected family farming centred on agricultural family farms, which must be defended. [...] We had very strong political messages. For which we fought, not only at the regional-, but also country-level [...]. I don't know if it's the regional [institutional] level, but it's the regional level through which ROPPA influenced countries. [...]. ROPPA's political message influenced countries to defend these positions in their national policies.²⁹⁶

A regional policy diffusion process thus gradually took shape. Initially based on Senegal's LOASP, the diffusion dynamic was strengthened by a similar process in Mali and the adoption of its own *Loi d'Orientation Agricole*²⁹⁷ (LOA) in 2006.²⁹⁸ This involved peasant leaders, civil servants, academics and technical experts traveling between countries of the region, and exchanging experiences between their respective countries' agricultural policy elaboration processes, as recalled by a CNCR technical advisor:

Once we had results in Senegal [...] ROPPA immediately saw the need to share this 'Senegalese expertise' with other countries. This explains all of CNCR leaders' visits to Mali. Then to Côte d'Ivoire, etc. In Burkina,

²⁹⁶ Interview AO-WA22.

²⁹⁷ Agricultural Orientation Law.

²⁹⁸ Côte d'Ivoire (LOACI) and Burkina Faso (LOASPHF) would follow suit adopting their respective laws in 2015. Guinea, Benin and Niger are in the process of elaborating their own laws at the time of writing (ROPPA, 2017).

it was CNCR peasant leaders who went there to train them, to tell them that this is the strategy through which you have to go, until we get there.²⁹⁹

A senior civil servant who worked for decades in Senegal's Ministry of Agriculture describes his role in the regional policy diffusion process:

I was lucky to go in the name of the Senegalese government, to help decant the process somewhat, and ignite the process. Because they [had] spent 6 months arguing [...]. And this was a demand from [Malian] President ATT [Amadou Toumani Touré] himself, who had asked President Wade. And they asked me. It was financed by French cooperation. And we discussed. Doctor Diara, who was nominated for the implementation of LOA in Mali, he comes here often. The LOA in Mali, it is the LOASP from Senegal. They are [practically] the same. [For] Côte d'Ivoire's LOACI [*Loi d'Orientation Agricole de Côte d'Ivoire*³⁰⁰]: they came here. We discussed, exchanged. And they went back with a lot of material from Senegal's LOASP. Building from our prior meetings at ECOWAS [...]. Benin: they came here. Between December 2015 and January 2016. Government agents, peasant organisations - about thirty people. We visited CNCR.³⁰¹

Regarding academic and technical expertise, IPAR also played a fundamental role, as acknowledged by CNCR:

When we talk about peasant leaders - we did not develop the strategy here [at CNCR headquarters]. But the strategy was: peasant leaders who called upon expertise, and amongst this expertise, most of it came from IPAR, with the likes of Jacques Faye, etc. It was they who had helped define the strategy to develop here. So when we had to also go in the other countries, IPAR was clearly associated to this.³⁰²

The regional policy diffusion of LOAs relates not only to the content of proposed legislation, but also to the mobilisation and participation methods utilised by ROPPA's national AOs to gain the upper hand in negotiations with governments. This varied from one country to another, depending on the representative legitimacy and political clout of each ROPPA national platform, and the degrees of openness of governments to allow for participatory policy formulation processes. Nevertheless, elements of a strategy first utilised by CNCR in Senegal, and expanded upon by CNOP in Mali, particularly involving the drafting of a 'peasant memorandum' (i.e. an autonomous policy programmatic document) based on cross-country village-level consultations (as subsequently occurred in Benin, Niger, and Burkina Faso³⁰³), have at the very least strengthened national platforms' negotiating clout, even where government authorities were initially not as receptive to their policy proposals as in the first two Sahel countries.

²⁹⁹ Interview AO-WA9.

³⁰⁰ Côte d'Ivoire's Agricultural Orientation Law.

³⁰¹ Interviews CS-WA5 and CS-WA7.

³⁰² Interview AO-WA9.

³⁰³ Interviews AO-WA-19, AO-WA-15, AO-WA16.

The Malian LOA (2006) policy process is particularly representative of a strong national peasant platform empowered by a government that understood the significance of creating a national policy framework centred on the historically marginalised PFF majorities. It underwent several stages of elaboration: i) an existing national invited space (*commission paritaire*) where AOPP had a seat; ii) AOPP then gained the mandate to conduct national consultations (certain villages, regional syntheses, and national level encounters); iii) joint elaboration with key ministries in agricultural policy; iv) exclusively inter-ministerial alterations of the original document which reversed many of the inclusions from the on-site consultations v) permanent lobbying at the national assembly to reconstruct the originally formulated document. This version was then finally approved at the national assembly in 2006³⁰⁴.

The drafting of LOAs, inspired by Senegal's experience, was perceived as relevant to other ROPPA members for at least two reasons. Firstly, it would provide countries with a comprehensive, long-term strategic framework, better shielded against the volatilities and whims of successive government administrations, consequent policy discontinuities, and dispersions of resources.³⁰⁵ Secondly, such formulation processes founded on AOs' robust participation became a unique opportunity to legally enshrine formal recognition of family farms and agricultural professions, and mould some of the policy implications of this recognition.³⁰⁶

The LOAs approved in the last two decades in Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso deal with a wide range of agricultural policies, including: the status of agricultural professional organisations (including ROPPA national platforms and their members), provisions for access to services such as credit, extension, insurance, infrastructure, and the creation of funds to implement these. However, they are most notable for establishing definitions of the family farm and their members' specific rights and duties.³⁰⁷ This relates particularly to how family farms: i) are distinct from agricultural enterprises; ii) are characterised by social, environmental, and cultural specificities and functions; iii) are defined by forms of collective

³⁰⁴ Interview AO-WA22.

³⁰⁵ Interviews AO-WA22, AO-WA19, AO-WA15, and AO-WA16.

³⁰⁶ Interviews AO-WA22 and AO-WA19.

³⁰⁷ Interview CS-WA5/CS-WA7.

organisation that may partly overlap with - but are different from - individual, nuclear family, or cooperative-like units.

A clear distinction is established between family farms and agricultural enterprises in all LOAs. This differentiation is frequently justified by ROPPA's representatives as necessary to avoid the recurrent problem of agricultural policies disproportionately benefitting larger-scale farmers. As one of CNCR's members put it:

Regarding the status of the family farms, it was a concern raised by CNCR, in the LOASP [drafting process]. To urge the state to define and ameliorate public policies that target family farming. Because, first of all, it is essential and important to know who is a family farmer, a producer, and who needs to benefit from state subsidies. Because, as we have seen, every year subsidies are given out, but we realise that it is the category that we call 'large producer' that captures the greater part of these subsidies.³⁰⁸

Labouring and management conditions are key criteria used to operate this distinction in the region's agricultural framework laws. Whereas agricultural enterprises must exclusively employ formal wage labour in accordance with pre-existing legislation, labour relations amongst members of family farms are "freely defined" and "not governed by the labour code" – as explicitly stated in both Senegal's LOASP (art. 18) (République du Sénégal, 2004:10) and Burkina Faso's LOASPHF (art. 58) (République du Burkina Faso, 2015:36). While Mali's LOA and Côte d'Ivoire's LOACI do not specify this latter element, they both refer to the "common use of factors of production" (explicitly including labour amongst these factors in LOACI) as one of family farms' defining features (République de Côte d'Ivoire, 2015:118).

The laws do mention the *possibility* for family farms to hire wage labour, according to the official labour code (Mali's LOA art. 18, Burkina Faso's LOASPHF art. 62), or to a specific convention to be elaborated by the state and professional agricultural organisations (Senegal's LOASP art. 18). They therefore indirectly imply that externally hired labour is more frequently the exception than the norm, but stop short of setting rigid rules determining the proportion of labour use that should be family-based. Similarly, Burkina Faso's LOASPHF mentions that agricultural activities are *entirely or partly* conducted by family members, without specifying the proportion of externally hired or family labour.

³⁰⁸ Interview AO-WA9.

Thus, whereas definitions in other parts of the world – including South America – establish *predominant* use of family labour as a defining criterion, West African LOAs imply that this is most frequent, without excluding other situations (hired wage labour may predominate for specific types of activities or times of the year, such as planting or harvesting). But they do clearly delimitate them from agricultural enterprises by defining the latter through its exclusive use of wage labour.

Management of both family farms and agricultural enterprises can be assigned to one individual according to all of the above-cited laws. However, whereas agricultural enterprises can alternately only be managed as private limited companies, legal provisions entrust family farms with varying degrees of collective management responsibilities to their remaining members. While Senegal's LOASP states that family farms can be either individually or collectively managed, the three other countries' laws establish the figure of a designated male or female 'head' (*chef d'exploitation*) in charge of managing and legally representing the family farm. This is nonetheless counterbalanced with provisions upholding the rights of family farms' other members. Thus, according to Burkina Faso's LOASPHF, the *chef d'exploitation* is designated by all adult members, and his/her management activities are exercised "under the control of the family farm council, which is made up of all members" (République du Burkina Faso, 2015:35). Furthermore, it formally establishes equality in rights (and duties, in the case of Mali's LOA) between all family farm members. Similarly, Côte d'Ivoire's LOACI prohibits any exploitative or demeaning practice towards members of any type of farm. Mali's LOA and Burkina Faso's LOASPHF also make it compulsory for heads of family farms to "promote participatory management practices" (République du Mali, 2006:5; République du Burkina Faso 2015:36), as part of several provisions that aim to balance individual and collective management responsibilities.

Recognising the coexistence of individual and collective management practices and establishing legal clauses to ensure that these are well balanced was part of some of ROPPA national AO members' planks, when debating the proposed content of LOAs. According to the president of Mali's CNOP, participatory management practices as formulated in that country's LOA (art. 17), enable to "recognize everyone's role. Youth, women, men, elders; everyone [...]"

has something to say. Organize farm councils to plan production. And have farm councils to manage harvest [...] We fought in the discussions on the status [of family farms], for this." ³⁰⁹

In a similar way as recognizing the equality of rights between all family farm members – criticised by some as perhaps unrealistically bold, given its "denial of traditional social values" (Bélières, 2014:16) – the struggle to establish more democratic practices at the micro-local unit of the family farm can be seen as a continuation of struggles initiated by some of ROPPA's founding members since the 1970s (see chapter 4). The autonomous movements and local associations that grew exponentially after the 1973-1974 Sahel drought were indeed already seeking to give greater voice to women and youth. Nevertheless, movement leaders at the time realistically understood this would only take root if balanced with continuing respect for the traditional role held by male elders, whose own experience and knowledge they also valued.

The balance struck between respect for certain elements of traditional patriarchal decision-making with the local *political* empowerment of youth and women finds its *economic* equivalent in the everyday practices that reconcile collective and individual forms of ownership, and the use of factors of production within the family farm unit. Hence:

All [members] are mutually interconnected, through links, but each has individual rights, and together collective rights [...]. For example, the youth can - say he's working with horticulture and does well, he can buy his motorcycle. He doesn't need the support of his family. It's his money. He's been given a plot. Women, they have a small plot, they have resources, they can do what they want with them. So [the law] doesn't prevent you from having the collective *and* [emphasis added] the small private [plot and resources] on the side.³¹⁰

Definitions of FF in LOAs have thus included innovative forms of farm management that strike a fine balance between collective and individual rights. This very much reflects the inclusiveness of country-wide consultations led by ROPPA national platforms that fed into LOAs. Consultations indeed revealed a strong push towards obtaining recognition of the extended family farm model that has endured over countless generations throughout West Africa (despite recurrent climatic, political, and/or economic shocks). But they also revealed a will, particularly from women and youth, to obtain greater decision-making voice and economic autonomy as individual members within each collective farm unit.

³⁰⁹ Interview AO-WA22.

³¹⁰ Interview AO-WA22.

Yet recognition of West African FF posited in LOAs is also about crafting policies that identify these as distinct units composed of "one or several members united by kinship links or practices and customs" (as expressed in Mali's LOA, art. 14) (République du Mali, 2006:4). In other words, they entail an incorporation of the family farm as the prevailing culturally-rooted socio-economic entity in West African rural areas, to foster more adequately designed forms of policy support.

Nevertheless, identification by the state for agricultural policy purposes to date still occurs generally only at the scale of individuals or cooperative-like entities such as Senegal's GIE, which allow for any group of people to freely associate, regardless of them living on the same farm and having family/customary links or not (see chapter 4). Hence, in Senegal, tenure rights can be accessed by individuals, whilst collective access to services such as agricultural credit can be made available through cooperatives or GIEs, but none of these are necessarily accessible to *family farms* in their own right.

Furthermore, the nuclear family – as opposed to prevalent wider groups formed by the extended family and other members collectively farming and living on the same plot – is the default unit of reference for official statistics guiding policy decisions and implementation. As stated by a CNCR advisor:

All the statistics [...] rely on what they call *ménages agricoles* [i.e. agricultural (nuclear family) households]. Whereas we [...] speak of the family farm, under which you can find several agricultural households. For us, this was the object of many discussions, to be able to find an agreement. Now, we accept to continue using the concept of agricultural household, but let us agree [...] that in a given [family] farm, one can find several households. When we undertake our studies for the monitoring of our farms, we can correlate [our results] with [official] statistics. For instance when DAPSA³¹¹ talks [...] about 2.000 households, we know that this may be 6.000 [households]. 6.000 households [may actually correspond to] 2.000 family farms.³¹²

Notwithstanding variations between each country's legislation, the above-described regional policy diffusion process of agricultural orientation laws has contributed to create legal benchmarks that highlight the singularities of the family farm across francophone West African countries. Official recognition of a pervasive use of *family labour*, combined individual and collective *management* practices, and the *wider extended family* as a distinct social, cultural, and

³¹¹ *Direction de l'Analyse, de la Prévision et des Statistiques Agricoles* - Directorship for Agricultural Analysis, Forecast and Statistics, a government agency linked to Senegal's Ministry of Agriculture.

³¹² Interview AO-WA9.

economic entity is gradually enabling policy formulators and implementers to tailor policies to a longstanding FF sector that has been newly identified through negotiated and intelligible criteria.

But to what extent have these legislations actually influenced policy implementation on the ground? Although some countries are still in formulating stages (Niger, Guinea, Benin) or have approved laws fairly recently (Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso), looking at ROPPA's national peasant platforms' strategies over the last decade and a half in early adopters (Senegal and Mali) allows to gauge how they have continuously combined mobilisation and participation to steer agricultural and rural development policies in adequacy with orientation laws approved over a decade ago. This has proved a challenge in both cases. But it has also generated innovative and differentiated strategies in each country.

Nevertheless, most state authorities still consider peasants a reserve army of cheap labour, which costs much less to maintain than the minorities of formal urban workers whose labouring rights require public funds, while peasants are left to their own devices to ensure their social reproduction. Yet increased social differentiation, bringing consolidation opportunities for some and impoverishment (with or without proletarianisation) for others, has pushed ROPPA national platforms to negotiate legal recognition of all of the above segments as a single self-managed rural labouring class. This is witnessed in LOAs, the national agricultural policy framework laws negotiated with strong participation of ROPPA's national platforms in the Sahel (Benin, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger) as well as other tropical francophone countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Guinea) during the 2000s and 2010s.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to show how rural labouring class fractions in South America and West Africa united efforts through collective representation in AOs to become legally recognised as a specific policy category. COPROFAM and ROPPA both founded their collective rural labouring class representation and policy demands around the interrelated discursive frames of *family farmer*, *family farming*, and *family farm*.

These discursive frames correspond to the three key criteria that have been most frequently defended and negotiated by RAOs in SA and WA to define their members' economic

activities, considering the rural household (and in some cases the enlarged family or rural community) as a single economic unit. Hence in both regions, this economic unit is defined by combinations of self-management (*family farming*) of one's own labour (*family farmer*) on one's own land (*family farm*). In the countries where such criteria have been clearly defined and legally enshrined, COPROFAM and ROPPA leaders subsequently turned their attention towards obtaining sufficiently voluminous support for FF, demanding coherent sets of public policies in their regions and countries.

The recognition of the family farmer as a clearly defined subject of state policy through government-sanctioned legislation in countries of SA and WA was a historical milestone for COPROFAM and ROPPA national member organisations. Although in both regions, this process was initially led by a single country – Brazil or Senegal – several neighbouring countries (Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina in SA; Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire in WA) followed suit, while others are currently in the process of negotiating legal frameworks influenced by these processes.

All three FF-related discursive frames have been used in two key dimensions: i) AO self-representation and ii) policy plank formulation. As a discursive frame for self-representation, COPROFAM members' self-reference as *peasant and indigenous family farmers*,³¹³ and ROPPA's as *peasant and agricultural producers* working and living on *family farms* have crystallised as a newly recognised economic, social, and political actor within their national jurisdictions. This has legitimated the existence of COPROFAM and ROPPA's national-level member organisations as speaking for a legally defined public that encompasses diverse fractions of the wider rural labouring classes within the two regions.

In policy terms, the legal recognition of family farming translates as the recognition of family farmers' rights over their own labouring process through individual and collective self-management. This can enable to better channel state-directed demands for access to credit, insurance, rural extension, among other essential policies to support the production, processing, and distribution of food and other agricultural products, as it did to a significant extent in some South American countries (particularly Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay), but has yet to occur at scale in West African countries.

³¹³ Agricultura Familiar Campesina e Indígena / Paysans et Exploitants Familiaux.

Chapter 7 - Regional Trade Protection and Promotion

Introduction

The third policy process guiding this comparative study is the one most associated with regional organisations, given that one of the premises of integration between neighbouring nation-states has historically been the lowering of mutual trade barriers, and the agreement of common external tariffs vis-à-vis third countries outside these regions.

In principle such measures are held to enable a mutual strengthening of neighbouring countries' economies, by making the most out of geographical proximity, economies of scale, or productive complementarities. This in turn potentially allows regions to negotiate as stronger blocs on the global arena. Nevertheless, even relatively consolidated regional entities by Global South standards such as MERCOSUR and ECOWAS still have very low levels of intra-regional trade, respectively peaking at around 15% and 10% of the two blocs' members' total international trade as of the early 2010s. These figures are a reminder of the enduring predominance of colonially inherited core-periphery trade linkages. They also reflect the difficulties of fostering deeper regional integration within the contemporary international order.

The production and distribution of food is no exception to this rule. Whereas most West African countries were still net food exporters at the time of their independence, by the 1970s-1980s they had become critically dependent on food imports. This was made abundantly clear at the onset of the 2008 food price crisis. Likewise, South American agricultural export giants still witnessed high levels of hunger and under-nutrition in the 1990s-2000s, demonstrating that efficiency in producing food for export markets does not necessarily correlate with providing food security for a country's own people.

The family farming production of COPROFAM and ROPPA members is essentially linked to food for local, national, and intra-regional markets. However, it also includes members who produce for distant export markets, such as groundnuts and cotton respectively from the Sahel and savannah drylands, or maize and soya beans from the humid Pampa grasslands, making AOs' relationship to trade policy multifaceted and complex.

What have been COPROFAM's and ROPPA's strategies to influence trade policy in the regional invited spaces to which they have had access? How do trade policy priorities reflect the

diversity of peasant family farmers and resolve potential conflicting interests within COPROFAM and ROPPA member organisations? Which alliances have they struck in order to influence trade policies in their respective regions? Have the approved policies enabled to create alternative trade visions that favour PFFs or have these been merely defensive damage control strategies?

The period between the early 1980s and late 2010s has been characterised by decades-long negotiations of global, regional, and bi-regional trade agreements, with considerable implications for the peasantries of SA and WA. The mid-1990s in particular witnessed the conclusion of several international trade agreements and the launch of negotiations towards a number of additional deals. The former included the entry into force of the WTO and its Agreement on Agriculture in 1995, the Treaty of Asunción that created MERCOSUR in 1991, the revision of the ECOWAS treaty in 1993, and the creation of UEMOA in 1994. The launch of extra-regional negotiations between these and other blocs soon followed: Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) (1998) and EU-MERCOSUR (1999) in SA, and the EU Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with African regional organisations after the signature of the Cotonou Agreements in 2000³¹⁴ in WA. At the global level, the WTO Doha Round was launched one year later, in 2001.

Whether between asymmetric neighbouring countries or with other regions of the globe, liberalisation of trade in the 1990s occurred with little to no consultation of PFF sectors in both studied regions. This created a sense of urgency within AOs, given the impending risks of opening up SA and WA markets to cheap food from more powerful competitors. Indeed, the very creation of COPROFAM (1994) was ignited by mutual fears amongst Southern Cone family farmers of being wiped out by their neighbours' larger-scale producers, just as ROPPA's (2000) was strongly influenced by the perceived risk of West African family farmers losing their national markets to European producers (see chapters 3 and 4). Influencing the actual nature of trade policies became a subsequent imperative for both COPROFAM and ROPPA, rendered possible by the opening of some trade negotiation spaces to agrarian organisations in the early 2000s.

³¹⁴ FTAA negotiations would be abandoned in 2005, while EU negotiations yielded treaties signed with all ECOWAS countries but Nigeria by 2018, and with MERCOSUR by 2019, though these have not been ratified.

This chapter explores COPROFAM's and ROPPA's strategies to influence trade policy at the regional level. It focuses on three key dynamics from the extra-regional, intra-regional and national perspectives³¹⁵: i) a mostly defensive stance aiming to protect sensitive sectors from extra-regional trade agreements, including by militating against their ratification (subsections 7.1.1 and 7.2.3); ii) efforts to strengthen intra-regional trade under mutually beneficial conditions (subsections 7.1.2 and 7.2.1); iii) regional policy diffusion processes of initiatives aiming to expand PFFs' access to their national markets (subsections 7.1.3 and 7.2.2).

7.1 COPROFAM in MERCOSUR

Just as the founding of COPROFAM was prompted by concerns over impending trade liberalisation across the Southern Cone, the opening of a permanent regional invited space for FF policy dialogue was also motivated by COPROFAM members' urge to influence MERCOSUR trade agreements and norms. Nevertheless, international trade has yet to become one of COPROFAM's major areas of policy influence. This relates to a series of factors examined in the subsections below, including the role played by export-led agribusiness in providing Southern Cone countries' left-of-centre governments with fiscal resources during the 2000-2014 commodity boom cycle (7.1.1), but also the heterogeneity of COPROFAM's social base (7.1.2). Negotiating trade policy to the benefit of family farmers in SA has thus proved particularly challenging. Yet, continuing pressure from below on governments to materialise their commitments to food security and sovereignty has also been at the source of trade-related policy innovations (7.1.3). These revealed the potential of expanding and safeguarding family farmers' access to internal markets in ways that challenged conventional notions of trade policy, as well as the norms underpinning international trade under WTO rules.

³¹⁵ The chronological order followed for both case studies means that these three (extra-regional, intra-regional, and national) dimensions of regional trade policy processes are not treated in the same order in the SA and WA cases, given the differing moments at which these were prioritised in each region.

7.1.1 Extra-regional trade negotiations and the creation of REAF/MERCOSUR

At its 4th Assembly in Ypacaraí, Paraguay, in June 2003, COPROFAM members publicly manifested their preoccupation with FTAA, WTO, and MERCOSUR-EU negotiations, and its "agreement proposals which seriously limit the possibilities for development and poverty reduction in the region" (COPROFAM, 2003b:6). COPROFAM's demands for greater policy influence on extra-regional trade negotiations had indeed gained momentum, particularly via CONTAG's participation in the Brazilian Network for the Integration of Peoples (REBRIP), a grouping of social movements, labour unions, and NGOs created in the late 1990s. When the Lula administration took office in 2003, REBRIP's deliberations had consolidated a considerable body of technical knowledge and elaborate positions on key trade negotiations potentially affecting Brazil's FF sector, chiefly the FTAA and WTO Doha Round.³¹⁶

These issues were debated between civil society representatives (including REBRIP and COPROFAM members) and government ministers at the *Family Farming and International Negotiations* seminar held in August 2003 at Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE).³¹⁷ Shortly thereafter, the WTO 5th Ministerial Conference (MC5) (Cancún, September 2003), was the first to include members of civil society in an international Brazilian delegation. MDA minister Miguel Rossetto was in close contact with REBRIP representatives throughout the summit. Rossetto came back from Cancún convinced of the centrality of the issues posed by international trade negotiations for family farmers. It had become clear that WTO rules could potentially prevent the ministry from creating or expanding allegedly trade-distorting 'domestic support measures', i.e. national public policies that were the core reason for the ministry's existence. This prompted the creation of an international policy department within the ministry.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Interview CS-SA2.

³¹⁷ The resulting 'Latin American Charter on Family Farming' highlighted the "profound impacts on family farming" of international trade agreements, and likely repercussions, such as "decrease in farmers' incomes – which can lead to increase of rural exodus and of problems in urban agglomerations - [showing how] the evaluation of these repercussions cannot be reduced to estimations of financial results in the balance of trade" (COPROFAM, 2003a:6) and called for a "treatment which takes into account the specificities, fragilities, and potentials of family farming [...] in international trade agreements" (COPROFAM, 2003b:9).

³¹⁸ Interview CS-SA2.

The Ministry of Agrarian Development's International Advisory and Trade Promotion Office (AIPC/MDA) thus became Brazil's first public institution to negotiate trade policies in representation of the interests of peasant family farmers. AIPC held frequent meetings with REBRIP's Agriculture Working Group, in what became an informal yet dynamic national invited space for family farmer-centred trade policy formulation.

The G-20 group of developing nations (formed at MC5) was indirectly a child of this articulation, given that agricultural trade issues were pivotal in precipitating the group's creation. Indeed, China and India alone represent more than half of the world's peasantries (Lowder et al., 2014), so their stake in defending PFFs was historically high. Yet Brazil's post-2003 shift from a merely agricultural export-driven stance to one that balanced it with an equal concern for food security (and relatedly, with family farming) was new. This enabled the surge of a common front of developing nations led by Brazil, India, and China, which put food security and support to peasant agriculture as a fundamental red line, thus changing trade negotiation dynamics in the Doha Round. It eventually led developed countries to adopt alternate strategies to expand their access to markets in the Global South. These included signing bilateral or so-called 'plurilateral' trade agreements as ways of bypassing the WTO. Thus, the European Union gave heightened priority to bi-regional negotiations that had been initiated with MERCOSUR in 1999.³¹⁹

At national inter-ministerial level, representatives of MRE and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) had a long-standing fluid relationship and deeply ingrained understanding of international trade negotiations, in which their essential aim was to conquer export markets. At regional level, MERCOSUR countries' largely export-oriented agribusiness sectors were prepared to sacrifice internal market access (facilitating imports of products such as milk, cheese, wine, or olive oil) in order to increase access to European markets (boosting exports of products such as beef, poultry, pork, or soya)³²⁰ (see Figure 18 below).

³¹⁹ Interview CS-SA2.

³²⁰ Interview CS-SA2.

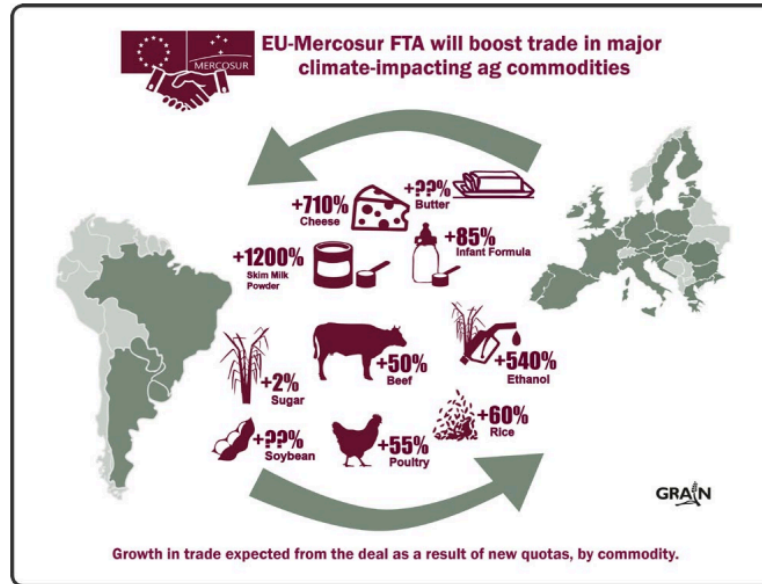


Figure 18: Expected rise in agricultural trade between MERCOSUR and the EU after agreement signature in 2019 (Source: GRAIN, 2019).

Brazilian dairy products, more than half of which emanate from family farmers,³²¹ became a decisive point of contention. Besides constituting an essential part of Brazilians' food and nutrition security, milk provides a rare source of non-seasonal year-round steady income, and is thus sometimes referred to as 'the family farmer's wage'. MDA negotiators at meetings with MAPA and MRE insisted that import duties on milk and dairy be kept sufficiently high to protect an essential sector for Brazilian FFs' income *and* national food security. Conversely, MAPA representatives argued that 'if we want them to open their markets, we need to lead by example [by opening ours]'.³²²

Whenever inter-ministerial trade negotiations mediated by MRE reached a stalemate, these would be settled by Brazil's Foreign Trade Chamber (CAMEX). CAMEX's governing body was composed of several ministries, including MAPA and MRE, but not MDA. Not surprisingly, it ruled in favour of reducing Brazil's dairy import duties in the offer that was soon to be made by MERCOSUR to the EU.

³²¹ 58% of Brazil's milk production, according to the 2006 Agricultural Census (França et al., 2009).

³²² Interview CS-SA2.

This episode led MDA to petition the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA), an invited space composed of civil society (2/3) and government (1/3) members. CONSEA's statutes enabled it to make non-binding recommendations to Brazil's President, hence it pleaded for Lula to overturn CAMEX's decision. While Lula did not go so far, he did determine that MDA would henceforth be included as a permanent member of CAMEX, giving the small ministry a key stake in the country's international trade policy as of 2005.³²³

MDA civil servants knew from initiatives such as COPROFAM's (2003) *Letter of Montevideo* (see chapter 3) and seminars, that neighbouring countries' AOs also demanded to be represented in MERCOSUR trade negotiations.³²⁴ Despite the unfavourable CAMEX ruling, MDA insisted and rounded up technical arguments to show the potentially devastating consequences of opening up Brazil's dairy market to European imports, in the hope that other MERCOSUR members might weigh in, defending their own FF dairy sectors. Delegations from the three neighbouring countries were oblivious to MDA's arguments.

The national and regional trade negotiation setbacks suffered by MDA negotiators served as a decisive thrust towards creating the regional policy dialogue space which COPROFAM members had been demanding for years. According to one of AIPC/MDA's former trade negotiators:

REAF came about as a way of trying to bring to the governments of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay the perception that in those countries family farming also exists, food security is also relevant. So REAF initially rose as a tactic, as it were. To foment [a recognition of FF] in those countries so that they'd go through a similar process to what Brazil was undergoing. So that their states would incorporate the two visions [agribusiness and FF], incorporate this diversity that existed in their respective rural areas [...]. In the medium-long term, in [negotiations with] the WTO, the European Union, it would be easier to bring in these themes.³²⁵

In sum, the perceived urgency of defending not just agribusiness, but also family farmers' interests in international trade deals by at least some Brazilian government officials yielded three significant institutional changes between 2003 and 2005: i) the creation of MDA's international office (AIPC); ii) the inclusion of MDA in CAMEX; iii) the creation of REAF, a regional invited space without a mandate for trade negotiations, but aimed at strengthening and coordinating Southern

³²³ Interview CS-SA2.

³²⁴ Interviews CS-SA2 and IR-SA1.

³²⁵ Interview CS-SA2.

Cone AOs' interests in extra-regional negotiations, as well as facilitating and reducing trade asymmetries within the bloc.

7.1.2 Intra-Regional Trade Facilitation of Family Farming Produce

Besides expressing their preoccupation with ongoing extra-regional trade negotiations (FTAA, WTO Doha Round, MERCOSUR-EU), COPROFAM leaders also increasingly voiced the importance of addressing intra-MERCOSUR trade imbalances. Repeatedly, COPROFAM declarations mentioned the need to 'reduce asymmetries' and 'harmonize regional policies' to that effect. Nevertheless, it would soon become clear after REAF's first years that discussing the specifics of trade policy was not an easy matter. This had to do not just with the highly technical nature of trade rules that created difficulties for both agrarian leaders and civil servants to discuss issues at depth,³²⁶ but also with the fact that trade is potentially divisive within COPROFAM itself.

For instance, more than half of Uruguayan family farmers produce bovine or ovine meat as their main source of income, a significant part of which is – directly or indirectly – destined to export markets. A similar claim applies to Argentina's middle-sized farmers who produce grains that are mostly destined for export, such as soya beans or maize. Conversely, for the peasant and indigenous bases of Paraguay, Chile, or Brazil's Northeast and North, agricultural production is mostly destined to national – frequently local – markets, and self-consumption. Thus, different members of COPROFAM can often have diametrically opposed views on trade negotiations.

As expressed by former COPROFAM General Secretary and President of Uruguay's CNFR Fernando López:

Regarding negotiations with the EU, we did bring forward [a joint COPROFAM position] at some point, a while ago. But this is not so common on trade issues. Because if you look, for instance, an organisation like CONTAG, or MUCECH in Chile: they have wage labourers, they have peasants, they have indigenous peoples. So trade issues are not a priority. [...] The same goes for ONAC in Paraguay. You realise that priorities are elsewhere. Access to land. Youth. Women [...]. Where there is less conflict between the organisations. Trade issues have that: we all agree on seeking the hereafter, until it is time [to negotiate]. For example, for [Uruguayan] small cattle ranchers, MERCOSUR-EU is not such a problem. Although they are not as integrated into chains, [for] one who rears lamb which later becomes meat, meat has an offensive position in MERCOSUR [trade] with the European Union. So for the cattle ranching family producer, there won't be any harm from the EU. There's no problem there. But this is not the same in all parts [of MERCOSUR].

³²⁶ Interview CS-SA27.

Similar claims apply even when looking inside a single country's AO. Hence, participatory processes unleashed by REAF in each of MERCOSUR's member countries revealed not only a clear demand from national AOs for policies that differed from those essentially targeting large-scale farmers. Newly created national-level dialogue spaces evidenced the need for differentiated policies *within* the FF sector, particularly regarding trade. Hence, as Argentina's National Family Farming Forum³²⁷ (FONAF) laid out in the key orientations of its *Documento de Mendoza* in 2006, where FONAF members acknowledged a twofold need for trade policies that i) are unlike those directed at larger-scale entrepreneurial agriculture; ii) utilise different policy instruments for different strata within a very diverse FF sector (FONAF, 2006).

These policy implications doubtless reflected a consciousness from FONAF's government and civil society participants on the need to accommodate different interests, so as to secure an alliance between smaller-scale peasants of predominantly dryland semi-arid or subtropical regions (NEA³²⁸, NOA³²⁹, Patagonia, Cuyo) and middle farmers of the Humid Pampa temperate belt that formed the core of FAA's base. Despite the accurate diagnosis of FONAF, the Argentine government did not have sufficient time nor resources to accommodate that variety of needs in its policies before the 2008 'crisis of the countryside'³³⁰ would burst and collapse the tenuous alliance between smaller and middle-scale sectors (see subsection 7.1.3).

Once REAF/MERCOSUR's policy dialogue participation mechanisms were incorporated by attending country delegations (see chapter 3), space was gradually opened for discussions on how trade policy impacted upon FFs' access to markets within each MERCOSUR member country, and across their common borders. Indeed, MERCOSUR's Resolution Nº 11/04 creating REAF not only called for the "strengthening of public policies for the sector" but also set among its goals "to promote the trade of products from family farming" (art. 1) (MERCOSUR, 2004:2) and facilitate FF's access to markets. Country delegations nevertheless soon realised that the initially limited amount of systematised knowledge about each country's FF sector impeded in-depth

³²⁷ *Foro Nacional de Agricultura Familiar.*

³²⁸ *Noreste Argentino* (Argentine Northeast).

³²⁹ *Noroeste Argentino* (Argentine Northwest).

³³⁰ *Crisis del Campo.*

discussions on different types of national policy support, let alone concerted regional trade policies.

Discussions on intra-regional trade were initially fraught with mistrust between delegates. Despite Argentina's agricultural trade surplus with its MERCOSUR neighbours (Villalobos, 2015) Argentine delegates initially feared the unknown concept of 'family farming' would be used by Brazilians as a pretext to flood the Argentine market with products in which the former was more competitive (e.g. pork and poultry). They were also wary of adopting FF as a guiding policy concept, lest WTO third countries denounce it as a non-tariff barrier in disguise.³³¹

Fears were not only voiced by government representatives. Members of COPROFAM and other AOs at REAF meetings requested that studies be conducted on transborder intra-MERCOSUR production and distribution chains of sensitive products – particularly those from Brazil. These were frequently suspected of trumping competition rules. A researcher to whom studies were commissioned to address such sensitive intra-regional agricultural trade issues explained:

The request of studying the most problematic chains for each country came from the social movements. Paraguay suggested the tomato chain, because Paraguay was permanently invaded by Brazilian producers.[...] bringing prices down and bankrupting [family] farmers.³³²

Studies on transborder tomato and pork chains³³³ demonstrated how the novelty of the participatory space and regional scale of its policy attributions did not prevent members of AOs from voicing issues that were chiefly local and immediate. This was partly due to lack of consolidated reliable data at national-level, preventing systemic reflection within government bureaucracies on FF policies, but also reflecting the need of insecure delegates to save face and build mutual trust. These studies, among other initiatives, set the ball rolling. Moreover, their rootedness in AOs' demands proved that the latter's participation in the regional invited space was not merely decorative.

³³¹ Interview IR-SA3.

³³² Interview IR-SA3.

³³³ Interview IR-SA3.

Following several seminars on trade facilitation of FF products, delegations at REAF's 5th meeting agreed to create a specific Trade Technical Group (TG) for strategic focus on intra-regional trade complementation, reflecting a shift in priorities from extra- to intra-regional trade. Agreeing on definitions of family farming and their country-level criteria became a necessary first step towards differential treatment in the trade of FF products within MERCOSUR (see chapter 6). Meanwhile, trade-related discussions identified ways of reducing regional asymmetries in agricultural production and commercialisation within and between MERCOSUR member countries, as had been called for in COPROFAM's (2003) *Letter of Montevideo*. This entailed ascertaining regional complementarities between different types of FF production and consumer markets³³⁴. REAF National Sections thus composed lists of goods based on their income-generating significance for family farmers, their prevalence as staple foods in national diets, but also their sensitivity to competition from other family farmers in neighbouring countries. These were to be merged into a regional list of key products impacting both family farmer incomes and food security³³⁵.

According to several key REAF civil society and government actors, the gathering of this information was to eventually lead to a MERCOSUR-level policy for family farming and regional food security.³³⁶ That vision was especially defended by Brazil,³³⁷ given that, by the time of REAF's creation in 2004, specific FF policies had already been running for almost a decade. For the government, regionalising these policies in tandem with neighbouring countries was the next step in keeping with MDA's regional strategy. Yet, the fact that neighbouring countries had not yet created specific policies for FF meant that their government bureaucracies were still grappling with the FF policy agenda.

The reality of everyday trade between MERCOSUR countries or with third parties after the lifting of trade barriers in the 1990s meant that sensitive sectors were exposed to much more ruthless competition than previously. Governments only had partial short-term measures at

³³⁴ Interview CS-SA28.

³³⁵ Interview IR-SA1.

³³⁶ Interviews CS-SA21, IR-SA1, CS-SA25.

³³⁷ Interview CS-SA13.

hand, such as the inclusion of a few select products in lists (LETEC³³⁸) that temporarily exempted these from application of MERCOSUR's common external tariff³³⁹.

The generation of reliable systematised and comparable data on family farmer production across MERCOSUR countries was greatly facilitated by the creation of national FF registries by the end of the 2000-2010 decade. It enabled governments to bring producers from neighbouring countries to the negotiating table and informally agree on voluntary production quotas that would level market access between them. This occurred repeatedly with dairy, peach and wine family farmers of Brazil's South, who were gradually losing national market access to their more competitive Uruguayan and Argentine counterparts.³⁴⁰

Milk and dairy were key (see 7.1.1). Though MDA policies to support dairy producing FFs significantly increased their output, they were still ill-equipped to compete with more consolidated MERCOSUR neighbours (see Figure 19 below). Rio Grande do Sul farmers suffered the most, since geographical proximity reduced transport costs for cheaper Uruguayan and Argentine dairy products. *Ad hoc* settlements were fraught with tension and frustration on all sides.³⁴¹

³³⁸ Portuguese/Spanish acronym for Common External Tariff Exemption List.

³³⁹ Interview CS-SA14.

³⁴⁰ Interview CS-SA14.

³⁴¹ Interview CS-SA14.

Cuadro 28. Sustitución de importaciones de productos lácteos de Brasil

En millones de US\$ corrientes y %

Región	1972 a 1991	%	1992 a 2011	%
MERCOSUR	466	30%	4.260	70%
Argentina	285	18%	2.930	48%
Paraguay	3	0%	8	0%
Uruguay	178	12%	1.321	22%
Resto del mundo	1.078	70%	1.801	30%
UE	540	35%	826	14%
EEUU	215	14%	129	2%
N. Zelanda	91	6%	312	5%
Suiza	42	3%	48	1%
Otros	190	12%	486	8%
Total	1.544	100%	6.061	100%

Fuente: Elaboración propia sobre la base de datos de UN-COMTRADE.

Figure 19: Table highlighting increase in Brazil's dairy imports from Argentina and Uruguay after MERCOSUR's creation³⁴² (Source: Villalobos, 2015).

In its first ten years (2004-2014), REAF's policy dialogue mechanism created a gradual process of characterising and regionally defining FF, as well as creating national registries. According to its idealisers, this process would have eventually led to the adoption of a common regional FF trade policy. However, this was not the case, due to several factors discussed in the next section, including: i) still nascent national family farmer registry systems in MERCOSUR member countries; ii) expectations for more immediate results from the Trade TG; iii) expansion of REAF beyond its Southern Cone origins, incorporating neighbouring Andean countries (Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela); and iv) their own experiences of facilitating family farmers' access to markets.

³⁴² Text translation: 'Brazil's dairy products' import substitution. In US\$ millions and %'. In the 1992-2011 period, 70% of Brazil's dairy imports came from its MERCOSUR neighbours as opposed to 30% in the previous 1972-1991 period.

7.1.3 Access to National Markets

Five main factors contributed to the REAF Trade TG's transition from focusing on intra-regional trade to becoming a regional platform for policy diffusion of national-level experiences that increased FF internal market access. Two of these factors related to a hollowing out of the Trade TG's agenda by 2010. Two other factors related to the aftermath of the 2008 food price crisis in the larger South American countries, namely: i) Argentina's policy shift towards smaller-scale peasant and indigenous FF, and ii) international recognition of Brazil's Zero Hunger policy. A fifth factor related to the greater participation of Andean countries – Ecuador, Bolivia, and later Venezuela – in REAF, and their own movements' and governments' conceptions of internal market access for peasant and indigenous FF.

7.1.3.1 REAF's Trade TG reinvented after Registry agenda gains its own TG

Before 2008, the REAF Trade TG's main achievement had been the reaching of a common regional definition of FF, and a corresponding regional norm (RES. 25/07) that translated it into practical criteria. These in turn laid the foundations for the creation of national family farmer registries. The FF definition, common criteria and registry agenda, though originally conceived as necessary for a regional trade policy with differential treatment for family farmers, took on a life of its own.³⁴³ REAF's Trade TG had thus spawned the creation of an *ad hoc* Registry TG, which would have been dissolved once national registries were set up. It nevertheless became permanent from 2012 onwards³⁴⁴ (Niederle, 2016) since members' sharing of information about each country's national registry proved mutually beneficial to the gradual improvement of these policy instrument databases (see chapter 6).

From 2011, collective realisation that building an intra-regional FF-specific trade policy agenda was a long-term endeavour became a second factor for the Trade TG's transition towards national internal market policies. While Brazil's family farmer registry had been created in 1996, it would take two more decades for neighbouring countries' Uruguay and Paraguay to establish

³⁴³ Interview CS-SA22.

³⁴⁴ At the 17th REAF, held on June 2012 in Buenos Aires.

equivalent policy instruments and reach significant coverage in family farmer registration.³⁴⁵ Argentina's registry was plagued with implementation problems from the beginning, preventing it from reaching comparable degrees of coverage. The Argentine FF registration difficulties were of course not merely technical, but closely interconnected with a major economic and political disjuncture. The next section shows that this was provoked by a standoff between Argentine articulated and disarticulated class alliances, and the shifting pivotal role of the middle peasantry.

7.1.3.2 The Argentine *Crisis del Campo* of 2008

Argentina's 2008 *Crisis del Campo*³⁴⁶ would have a decisive influence on the regional agenda, and the shift in focus of REAF's Trade Facilitation TG towards internal market access. The four-month lockout led by Argentine agribusiness organisations in mid-2008 shook the foundations of President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner's (2007-2011, 2011-2015) governing coalition and social base. Middle farmer constituencies within FAA played a significant role.

The spark that lit the fire was a presidential decree – Resolution 125 – issued in March 2008, which amounted to an export tax increase on grains (wheat, maize) and oilseeds (soya, sesame). The tax hike aimed to harness the 'agrarian rent'³⁴⁷ of historically high international prices at the time (see Figure 20 below) to fund redistributive policies. The export tax was also devised to put brakes on rapid soya bean expansion throughout the Argentine countryside, which was becoming a threat to the country's national food security, as food crops were being substituted on a massive scale by the lucrative oilseed.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Figures – coverage of national FF registries.

³⁴⁶ Crisis of the Countryside.

³⁴⁷ See chapter 3 on Juan Perón's introduction of a similar export tax to fund IAPI in the late 1940s.

³⁴⁸ Interview AO-SA3.



Figure 20: *Cristina Kirchner's two presidential mandates coincided with unprecedently high global soya bean prices*³⁴⁹. (Source: Sticco, 2015)

FAA internally found itself at a crossroads. Members of its growingly export-oriented middle farmer Pampa base felt that their interests were being threatened by CFK's export taxation bill. However, this was not the case for other regions' sectors of FAA (Patagonia, Cuyo, NEA, NOA), whose members relied mostly on internal markets. This agrarian territorial feature of non-Pampa FAA members is shared with other smaller-scale peasant organisations, as discussed further below (see 7.1.3.3).

The crisis affected FAA internally. This was precipitated by a sudden change in the organisation's national leadership, when Eduardo Buzzi became its president.³⁵⁰ In the words of an Argentine civil servant: "*Federación Agraria* started sounding weird. Buzzi would say one thing, and many people from *Federación Agraria* would say something else".³⁵¹ Many sectors of FAA,

³⁴⁹ Text translation: 'Soya: Prices in Chicago. Dollars per ton (annual average)'.

³⁵⁰ Interviews AO-SA9 and AO-SA10.

³⁵¹ Interview CS-SA27.

including its top directors, publicly voiced outrage at its president's decision to join the agribusiness-dominated *Mesa de Enlace* (Liaison Committee),³⁵² and continued to question this unholy alliance throughout Buzzi's mandate (Ámbito, 2013). A branch from FAA's political left broke away from the federation to form its own organisation. FAA Women and Youth representatives at the directorship also left.³⁵³

Age-old tensions between interests of the fertile humid Pampa and the so-called 'regional economies' of the remaining provinces came to the fore. Local organisations in the Argentine NOA and NEA were created aiming to garner support for Buzzi's tenure, but were not representative of a significant base in those provinces. These local organisations would end up turning against Buzzi by supporting his successor Omar Príncipe, who took over the FAA presidency in 2014.³⁵⁴ Príncipe adopted a more conciliatory tone towards CFK's government, and refocused FAA's discourse on the need for FF-specific policies.³⁵⁵

In the meantime, FONAF's organisational structure changed as a result of FAA's – and later government civil servants' – departure from it. By the time the 2008 crisis burst, peasant organisations with strongholds in Argentina's North, West, and South such as LVC's MOCASE³⁵⁶ and MNCI³⁵⁷ had already publicly voiced strong criticism of FAA on at least three grounds, namely for: i) its disproportionate weight inside FONAF to the detriment of other AOs, ii) joining and actively taking part in the agribusiness-led *Mesa de Enlace*, and iii) its privileged access to government posts and agricultural policy budgets via its (until then) close relationship with the Kirchner administrations.³⁵⁸

No longer mediated by the state, the national-level Argentine invited space began its metamorphosis into a civil society-only (re)claimed space. It evolved from a more vertical

³⁵² The four-month lockout was led by Argentina's two main agribusiness unions (*Sociedad Rural Argentina* – SRA and *Confederaciones Rurales Argentinas* – CRA), joined by two medium to smaller-scale farmer national organisations – *Confederación Intercooperativa Agropecuaria* – CONINAGRO, and FAA. Together, these four organisations formed the *Mesa de Enlace*, which became a publicly brandished symbol of opposition to Kirchner's government.

³⁵³ Interviews AO-SA9 and AO-SA10.

³⁵⁴ Interview AO-SA10.

³⁵⁵ Interview CS-SA8.

³⁵⁶ *Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero* (Santiago del Estero Peasant Movement).

³⁵⁷ *Movimiento Nacional Campesino Indígena* (National Peasant Indigenous Movement).

³⁵⁸ Interview AO-SA3.

'corporatist' to a more horizontal 'autonomous' structure, where smaller-scale peasant and indigenous organisations from the country's interior provinces now became predominant. Though retaining its acronym, FONAF's denomination changed from the *National Forum of Family Farming* to the *Federation of Grouped Family Farming Organisations*.³⁵⁹ As a result, both government and civil society's principal FF policy interlocutors shifted from a) the *middle family farmer* external market-oriented Humid Pampa base to the b) *campesino* (or semi-proletariat) internal-market oriented base mainly located in the NEA, NOA, Cuyo and Patagonia regions.

7.1.3.3 Strengthening access to local and national markets

The void created by FAA's departure from FONAF was filled with a series of new FF policy priorities in Argentina, among which access to local and national markets. This occurred particularly through the sharing of experiences of peasant family farmers organising into associations and cooperatives, and selling their produce directly to local consumers in street fairs or local village markets, thus avoiding surplus extraction by middlemen. This marked a watershed for Argentina's state-civil society interaction regarding the creation and expansion of trade policies for the wider FF sector. At the regional level, it became a decisive push for the Trade TG to reorient its agenda towards national, internal-market trade, as recalled by an Argentine civil servant present at REAF meetings at the time:

In 2011, in Asunción, Brazil proposed the Public Purchase [of food from family farmers regional] exchange programme. This mobilised us, because [...] we had absolutely nothing on public procurement. So we suggested talking about [...] healthy and affordable food provision systems [...]. We talked about food safety as well [...]. About SENASA³⁶⁰, which has a commission, SENAF³⁶¹ [...] for family farming [...]. All of the region's food safety agencies [create barriers for FF access to markets]. Public procurement branches out into many other themes. For instance: associations, cooperatives [...]. This triggers food safety issues: how is a peasant to sell to a school if they don't have a bromatological certificate? And we [expanded] towards other strategies. Such as the *ferias francas* [i.e. 'fair local markets'] here in Argentina. To reclaim this form of commercialisation [...]. Then there were the [FF] labels.³⁶²

Another factor was the gradual expansion of REAF to MERCOSUR's associate members Bolivia and Ecuador, and the incorporation of Venezuela after its full accession to MERCOSUR in

³⁵⁹ Respectively, from *Foro Nacional de la Agricultura Familiar* to *Federación de Organizaciones Nucleadas de la Agricultura Familiar*.

³⁶⁰ *Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria* (National Agrifood Safety and Quality Service).

³⁶¹ *Comisión de Agricultura Familiar del SENASA* (SENASA's Family Farming Commission).

³⁶² Interview CS-SA27.

2013. New delegations contributed to the Trade TG's incorporation of discussions on food sovereignty, *buen vivir*, and solidarity economy. In practice, this translated in the sharing of policy experiences strengthening FF conditions of access to local and national markets – a welcome move for the smaller-scale peasant fraction of COPROFAM's organisations, such as CONTAG's northeastern federations, Paraguay's ONAC, or Chile's MUCECH.³⁶³

The growing prominence of Argentina's peasant organisations in REAF delegations after the FAA leadership's provisional severing of ties with Kirchnerismo led to an increased role of LVC-linked organisations, such as MNCI and MOCASE. According to an MNCI representative, MERCOSUR's incorporation of Venezuela showed LVC organisations that other conceptions of trade could be discussed in the dialogue spaces:

The discussion was that basically, the conjuncture in Latin America had changed. It coincides with the entry of Venezuela [in MERCOSUR], of Bolivia [in REAF meetings]. Ecuador was also there. In this Latin-American conjuncture, is where we understood that both Venezuela, as Bolivia – Evo [Morales] was a founder of CLOC for example – the whole process in Venezuela, there is a recognition on the part of CLOC and Via Campesina, and vice-versa. We understand that through this, there was a rapprochement attempt, between REAF and CLOC/Via Campesina, with us in this discussion. Why do I tell you this? Because it was not only in Argentina that we were lobbied to enter REAF. It was in all countries – in Chile, in Brazil...³⁶⁴

7.1.3.4 Food and nutrition security invited spaces: from national to global

The change of focus of REAF's Trade TG was also influenced by the growing recognition of Brazil's public procurement policies that formed a pillar of its Zero Hunger (2003-2010)³⁶⁵ and Brazil without Extreme Poverty (2011-2014) strategies, and their diffusion through dialogues at REAF. Both its *Food Acquisition Programme* (PAA) and *National School Feeding Programme* (PNAE) at once provided food to vulnerable groups *and* ensured stable and predictable markets for family farmers from whom state institutions procured their food. PAA and PNAE became symbols of Brazil's successful hunger reduction at the peak of Lula's popularity during his second mandate (2006-2010) and Dilma Rousseff's first mandate (2011-2014). Following the 2008 world food price crisis, other nations became eager to understand Brazil's policies.

³⁶³ Interview AO-SA1.

³⁶⁴ Interview AO-SA3.

³⁶⁵ Zero Hunger's four strategic axes were: i) Access to food; ii) Strengthening of Family Farming; iii) Income Generation; iv) Articulation, mobilisation, and social accountability (Souza and Chmielewska, 2011).

Lula's Zero Hunger strategy proved influential beyond national borders. Its firm roots in participatory deliberation through local and national committees on Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) and on Sustainable Rural Development (CONDRAF) influenced the 2008-2009 CFS reform.³⁶⁶ The expression 'Zero Hunger' skyrocketed from a (national) PT 2002 election campaign rallying cry to a (global) UN slogan for hunger eradication. This was audible in the discourse of Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP), of former UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon's own 'Zero Hunger Challenge', and in the wording of SDG 2³⁶⁷.

A flagship policy of the Zero Hunger programme, PAA was a public procurement policy specifically targeted at less capitalised peasant family farmers, often living in the poorest rural areas. It was praised for contributing to peasant family farmers' capacities in better organising their production, and provided evidence of how state guarantee of steady and reliable markets became an important factor for rural social ascension in Brazil during the 2003-2014 period. Nevertheless, the scale of PAA was relatively small in terms of number of farms affected when taking into account the total number of family farmers. The 2009 bill which made it mandatory for public schools to purchase at least 30% of their food from family farmers provided an opportunity to considerably expand on the successful experience of PAA.

Government and civil society visits were organised to Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay between 2011 and 2013. A second programme was organised with visits to Chile, Ecuador, Venezuela and Paraguay between 2014 and 2016 (Niederle, 2016). Uruguay, Paraguay, and Chile were particularly interested in Brazil's public purchase policies. They successfully introduced legislation and policy mechanisms that connected some registered family farmers to markets via the institutionalisation of public purchase policies. COPROFAM's Chilean member organisation MUCECH was especially keen and adapted PAA to the Chilean context, as part of multi-pronged efforts to diversify Chilean peasant and indigenous family farmers' sources of access to their national markets³⁶⁸.

³⁶⁶ GSF citation of CONSEA.

³⁶⁷ Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to 'End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture' is also referred to in short as 'Zero Hunger'.

³⁶⁸ Interview AO-SA2.

In a sign of things to come, at the 12th REAF meeting held in Montevideo in December 2009, the Trade TG had already agreed a workplan for 2010 based on three policy instruments: *asociativismo*, family farming labels, and institutional markets (MERCOSUR, 2009). Institutional markets were prioritised, giving way to public purchase exchange modules. These were initially conceived as a 'quadrilateral cooperation' programme. The four MERCOSUR founding members sent delegations composed of government and civil society representatives to get to know neighbouring country's food public procurement policies, and share experiences and knowledge on how to direct these towards family farmers. Later they went on to include MERCOSUR associate members, such as Chile, Bolivia, and Ecuador, as well as Venezuela after 2013.

Notwithstanding the impressive spread of public purchase programmes, implementation in neighbouring countries has generally been slow and until now affected only a small proportion of family farmers. In some cases – most notably Chile – they show promising signs of expanding coverage. One challenge has been to strengthen family farmers' capacity to organise their production in accordance with this new state guaranteed demand, which relates to the sets of other policies demanded by AOs in the region, that relate to bolstering family farmer production. Despite the challenges in implementing the policy innovations discussed in REAF's Trade TG, by the beginning of the 2010-2020 decade, the terms of the debate on trade policy for FF had radically shifted, compared with ten years earlier.

Overall, COPROFAM scored several victories in opening up invited spaces for policy deliberation. After securing AO participation as a staple of REAF's *modus operandi*, discussions shifted focus from resisting extra-regional trade agreements to finding forms of regulating intra-regional trade in support of the South American FF sector as a whole. Nevertheless, the need to better know and understand each country's FF sector in its full diversity and complexity precluded any serious intra-regional trade policy formulation. Despite important debates on the possible nature of an intra-regional FF trade policy framework, these had to be set aside in favour of consolidating national-level experiences first. Protection from global and regional trade gave way to promotion of local and national trade on the scale of AO members' more immediate concerns. Yet the regional scale of debate and policy deliberation was crucial in ensuring the continuity of this policy shift inside each country, particularly regarding exchanges of experiences that

eventually yielded new public purchase policies, and their dual (pro-FF and food security) strategic outlook.

7.2 ROPPA in ECOWAS

ROPPA's creation in 2000 coincided with rising food import dependency, high population growth and increased strain on natural resources in WA. As stated in a document submitted by ROPPA to the WTO ahead of the Nairobi Ministerial conference in 2015, "excluding coffee, cocoa, tea and spices – which are not staple foods – [West Africa's] food import deficit increased from US\$ 549 million in 2000 to 12,6 billion in 2011" (ROPPA, 2015:4). Coupled with the world's fastest rising population (from 180 million in 1990 to 305 million in 2010, projected to reach 510 million by 2030), West African states' staple food import dependency, particularly among urban populations, became economically and politically unsustainable by the time 'food riots' erupted in many of the region's cities in 2008 (IFAD, 2017; Berthelot, 2013).

ROPPA's participation as a regional peasant platform in trade negotiations at global, extra-regional and intra-regional levels reflects its leaders' understanding of the interlocked multi-scalar nature of international trade rules. It was indeed a global-level WTO ruling that had called for an end to 78 Africa, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) countries' tariff-free access to the European market,³⁶⁹ on the grounds that this was discriminatory against non-ACP (mostly Latin American and Asian) developing countries. Thus, the EU-ACP Cotonou Agreements were signed in 2000 with a view to renegotiating Europe's trade relationship with most of its former colonies. The ensuing EPAs were initially to be negotiated by 31 December 2007 with a view to establishing supposedly 'reciprocal' EU-ACP trade relations as per the WTO ruling (Berthelot, 2013).

Differently from previous agreements signed with all ACP countries at once, these were negotiated between the EU and various regional blocs into which ACP countries were geographically clustered. The promotion of regional integration in the different ACP regions was indeed one of the stated goals of the Cotonou Agreements. Nevertheless, as ROPPA's Malian

³⁶⁹ Until then guaranteed by the Lomé Convention of 1975.

leader Ibrahima Coulibaly put it, "the process demanded a superficial acceleration of regional integration with the sole goal of signing the EPA" (Coulibaly, 2007, cited by Blein et al., 2012:41).

Yet, despite the extremely uneven odds stacked against them, the West African RAO played a key role in slowing down and avoiding a full ratification of EPA agreements with the EU (see subsection 7.2.3). It contributed to turning the threat of an EU-ECOWAS trade agreement into an opportunity to approve a higher Common External Tariff line (CETs) for most agricultural products at ECOWAS level, in order to protect the internal regional market (7.2.1). And it enabled innovative national-level policies to strengthen West African staple food producers' access to local and national markets (7.2.2). These processes paralleled each other, but are treated in the order that reflects their greatest visibility in public debate by focusing on ROPPA's mobilisation and participation strategies within them.

7.2.1 Regional common external tariff for food sovereignty

7.2.1.1 ROPPA's struggle for food sovereignty translated into trade policy claims

Since ROPPA's creation, its members' calls for 'food sovereignty'³⁷⁰ refer to policies that may enable the West African region to feed itself. Food import substitution is to be achieved through investment by peasant family farmers in staples that are already produced in West Africa. Their leaders' mention of food sovereignty is usually followed by concrete examples, as ROPPA's president Ibrahima Coulibaly clarified:

So there is no mystery, one needs to invest. And this production must be protected. We would give examples, such as that of Kenya, which had gone down this path of protecting its milk production, had stopped imports, became self-sufficient, and even a milk exporter in the [East African] sub-region. So we would show the success stories demonstrating that indeed we were capable, if only we gave chances to local production.³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ In ROPPA's own words, food sovereignty is "the right for any country or group of countries to define their agricultural policy in the interest of its populations, to develop and protect their production and markets, so that these may satisfy the needs of a healthy, sufficient, culturally and religiously acceptable diet, and may also be the basis for a just remuneration of agricultural family farms' labour" (ROPPA, 2006, Food Sovereignty Forum, cited by Blein et al., 2012:22).

³⁷¹ Interview AO-WA22.

Hence, according to ROPPA, the defence of a 'right to food sovereignty' justifies tariff barriers to protect the regional market and enable articulated regional integration. In ROPPA's written declaration distributed at the 2005 Hong Kong WTO Ministerial meeting, this was defined as a right of "our people to feed themselves and implement policies that favour them" (ROPPA, 2005:3). Yet, most significantly, the concrete policy implications of upholding this "right and duty of protecting the region's farmers" were "a *boundless tariffs system* for as long as the great agricultural powers continue to give direct and indirect support [to their agriculture] which are destroying our markets [emphasis added]" (ROPPA, 2005:4).

ROPPA's translation of food sovereignty in trade policy terms would later argue how protectionism need not be implemented to harm farmers and food consumers in other countries, but first and foremost to protect one's own: "food sovereignty does not imply autarky, but the right of each country to define its protection from imports *without dumping* [emphasis added]" (ROPPA, 2015:5). Moreover, this updated definition specified that protectionist measures need not be applied indiscriminately to all products: "countries may choose free trade in products for which they do not have sufficient potential to raise production at reasonable costs" (*ibid*). ROPPA's translation of 'food sovereignty' into policy terms is thus not a dogmatic stance in favour of all-around import tariff hikes. Rather, it is a firm assertion of the countries and regions' legitimate right to prioritise domestic food production in all the products for which this is objectively viable.

Trade policy for ROPPA is therefore about guaranteeing West African PFFs' access to national markets through equitable international rules. In the case of regional integration, it implies working "for an agriculture that supplies a sub-regional demand, an internal market, with safe quality food in sufficient quantity for all consumers in the region" (ROPPA, 2005:8). These objectives are nonetheless rendered impossible by grossly unequal competition with Northern producers, who under GATT rules benefited from more than 50 years of financial and technical support, and as of 2005 (a decade after the WTO's creation) still had import duties 3 to 6 times higher on food products than those of West Africa (ROPPA, 2005).

7.2.1.2 Strengthening the regional market through an ECOWAS Common External Tariff

ROPPA's participation in trade policy dialogues stretches back to the days of its creation in 2000, when a CET was being negotiated at UEMOA level. Although ECOWAS member states had decided to create a customs union as far back as 1993, the larger of the two West African blocs initiated negotiations to adopt its CET only a decade later, in 2003. UEMOA countries who previously took part in negotiations for that bloc's own regional agricultural policy (PAU) would later take advantage of ECOWAS's transition towards a customs union to renegotiate and increase (originally low) import tariffs applied to agricultural goods under UEMOA rules. Indeed, ECOWAS rules would eventually apply to all members, overwriting those previously applied in UEMOA.

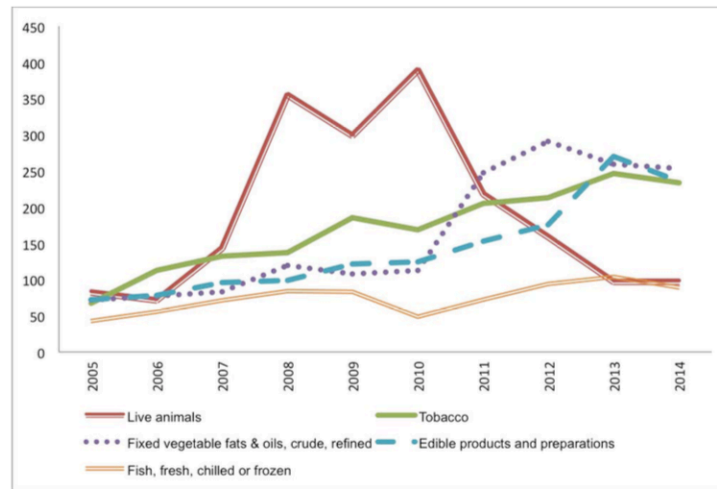
ROPPA's demand for a "priority to the regional market and protection at the borders" (Blein et al., 2012:23) in the wake of the early 2000s trade liberalisation agenda (EU-ACP Cotonou agreements, WTO Doha Round), found its roots in the actually existing "realities of rural West Africa", as one ROPPA leader put it.³⁷² Despite inheriting a colonial-era transport infrastructure geared towards extra-regional trade, the continuing widespread circulation of people, goods, and livestock along its countries' porous borders means that *informal* internal trade has remained significant across the region, reflecting the persistence of centuries-old trading networks (see chapter 4). Although official numbers place intra-regional ECOWAS trade at between 8-13% of its countries' average total trade, "it is estimated that approximately 75% of intra-regional trade is not accounted for in official statistics, as it takes place on an informal basis" (Torres and van Seters, 2016:ix).

Livestock is the most internally traded food staple, mainly from the Sahel to coastal countries (Inter-Réseaux, 2016). For instance, "in 2006-2007, Burkina Faso and Mali sold close to 4 million sheep and 1,8 million cattle towards Benin, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal, through informal transborder trade networks" (ENDA CACID, 2012:107). Likewise, West African rice has been traditionally traded along transborder exchange sites, particularly between Mali and neighbours Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire (ROPPA, 2005). Millet and sorghum is also intensely traded across WA borders, such as between southern Mali, northern Côte d'Ivoire, and western Burkina Faso (ENDA CACID, 2012). Many other examples reveal dense networks of

³⁷² Interview AO-WA11.

agricultural intra-regional trade, estimated in 2012 to represent up to 70% of the origin of several staples consumed in countries of the region. Thus, ROPPA's call for a strengthening of the intra-regional trade of staple foods, essentially produced by family farmers across West Africa, was to a large extent a call to legalise and support pre-existing intra-regional trade. One instrument to foster this internal trade was the adoption of a common external tariff for the ECOWAS region.

Figure 12: Evolution of ECOWAS top 5 intra-regional food exports (in millions of USD, in the last 10 years)



Source: <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/>

Figure 21: ECOWAS top 5 intra-regional food exports. (Source: Torres and van Seters, 2016).

The drive to adopt an ECOWAS CET was hastened by pressure from the EU to conclude negotiations for the EPAs with ACP regional blocs originally by the end of 2007, as stipulated by the Cotonou agreements (see subsection 7.2.3). This unexpectedly catalysed a regional class alliance for ECOWAS member countries to accelerate West African regional integration. As pointed out by a Senegalese journalist who closely followed trade negotiations:

Actually the CET was born out of mobilisation against the EPAs. Because people really fought very strongly against the EPAs [...]. And when pressure [for going ahead and negotiating the agreements] was too strong, [people felt] they could not create a common market in West Africa without a CET. But at the time, Europe asked them to copy UEMOA's CET model, whose highest tariff band was 20%, which was totally ridiculous. So people told them 'no'.³⁷³

The EU initially intended to negotiate a West African EPA only with UEMOA given that the latter was already a customs union by the early 2000s, and separately negotiate on a country-by-country basis with the remaining West African nations. However, by the time negotiations got

³⁷³ Interview AR-WA5.

under way, these were undertaken not just with UEMOA but all ECOWAS members plus Mauritania (Ukaoha, 2008; Bilal and Braun-Munzinger, 2008). Indeed, after the Ivorian civil war broke in 2002 and plunged the largest UEMOA economy into chaos and instability for much of that decade, the recognised role of ECOWAS in the military and political stabilisation of Côte d'Ivoire generated an opportunity for its two non-UEMOA heavyweights Ghana and Nigeria to fill the regional leadership vacuum (Faivre-Dupaigre, 2007).

Nigeria, which had historically protected its internal production and market in attempts to industrialise its economy, was chronically flooded by goods indirectly imported from outside the region, through its smaller neighbours Benin and Togo. The latter countries had much lower import tariffs, and fed on a re-exporting and smuggling economy towards their larger neighbour (Orjinmo, 2019). Similar tensions often came to the fore between the Gambia and Senegal, given that the former's economy thrived on cheap imports re-exported towards the latter's larger internal market.³⁷⁴

Wide variations in the sizes of internal markets and domestic production capacity, and correspondingly divergent trade policies across ECOWAS countries thus meant that negotiating a CET for the region's 15 members would be no easy task. This is well illustrated by contrasting country positions in negotiations for the tariff line to be applied on rice: whereas the Gambian government pleaded in favour of bringing the UEMOA's 10% import tariff down to 0%, Ghana advocated to raise it to 20%, and Nigeria to 50% (Faivre-Dupaigre, 2007).

³⁷⁴ Interview AR-WA4.

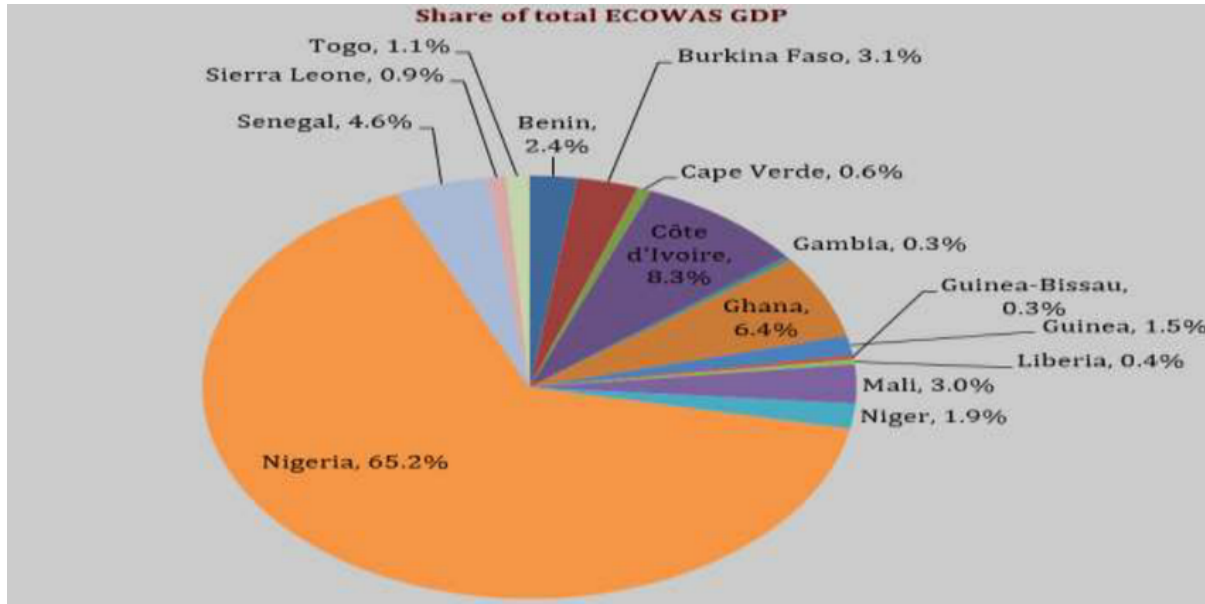


Figure 22: *Share of ECOWAS GDP by country*³⁷⁵.
(Source: Ntara, 2016).

In the meantime, EU negotiators lobbied ECOWAS to simply extend the very low CET tariff bands adopted by the 8 UEMOA members in 1998 to the remaining 7 ECOWAS members (Ukaoha, 2008). ROPPA in turn pressured UEMOA and ECOWAS to refuse signing any extra-regional agreement that risked drastically opening West African markets before the prior building of "a regional agricultural market that is competitive with the rest of the world" (ROPPA, 2005:7). ROPPA thus called for an extension of the deadline to conclude the EU-ECOWAS EPA beyond 2007, and allow the ECOWAS CET negotiations to run their due course.

At the 30th ECOWAS session held in Niamey in 2006, Heads of State and Government had decided to fast track the UEMOA-ECOWAS CET harmonisation process by transposing most of UEMOA's tariff lines to ECOWAS, following the EU recommendation. However, the government of Nigeria, backed up by ROPPA and other CSOs, coalesced to press for the CET to be raised above the UEMOA maximum 20% tariff, and pushed for the creation of a fifth tariff band at 50%. This was to be applied to products deemed strategic for the region's development, particularly agricultural products 'essential for the region's food sovereignty' (as officially stated in the

³⁷⁵ According to World Bank 2014 data (Ntara, 2016).

region's previously negotiated agricultural strategy - ECOWAP/CAADP) - such as grains, oils, meats and milk, among others (Blein et al., 2012).

Although negotiations forced a compromise to reduce the initial 50% CET plead to 35%, the approval of a fifth tariff band was considered a milestone in ROPPA's efforts towards making FF economically viable within ECOWAS borders. At the end of negotiations, just over half of agricultural products made it to the 4th (20%) or 5th (35%) tariff band, with none in the 1st (0%). Moreover, 90% of the goods that made it to the 5th tariff line were agricultural products (de Roquefeuil, 2014 et al.). Nevertheless, two key food staples maintained their low UEMOA tariff levels: rice (10%) and maize (5%) (Blein et al., 2012).

Widespread criticism of low UEMOA tariffs applied on agricultural products in its member countries since 1998, and ROPPA's previously acquired experience in UEMOA negotiations after 2000 served as a thrust to negotiate the higher tariffs at ECOWAS. Producers of rice, chicken, tomato paste, dairy or cooking oil in UEMOA countries were particularly vocal (de Roquefeuil et al., 2014). These products are precisely those in which family farmers and other actors along production, processing, and distribution chains were better organised into what is known in francophone countries as *interprofessions*. These specific national-level representative bodies enabled not only negotiation between its members, but also the defence of common goals linked to safeguarding internal market access (see 7.2.2), including at regional level.

ROPPA's strength in influencing the CET also involved consolidating its national-level platforms throughout the trade negotiations. Although many other civil society sectors were present, ROPPA had the most solid network in terms of representation across WA. As seen by a close observer from the Senegalese press:

ROPPA had the advantage of saying 'we represent the bulk of the West African peasant movement', which had great critical mass. [...] The trade negotiations indeed enabled ROPPA to strengthen its cohesion within the different national entities. It became necessary to have representations in the different countries of West Africa, to show that effectively when we talk about peasant movement representativity, we're not talking about the Senegalese, Burkinabe, or Togolese peasant movement, but the whole [WA] peasant movement, and each entity of each country felt [represented].³⁷⁶

Yet it was ROPPA's articulation between national federations and regional scale that made the difference, not least given the fact that regional authorities respected the West African

³⁷⁶ Interview AR-WA5.

RAO more than did individual national governments, such as Senegal under president Wade's administration, as noted by the above-cited Senegalese journalist:

I followed [this process] with [former ROPPA president] Ndiogou Fall, I travelled with him to Abuja [...] That's when we saw that when we were in Senegal at the time [during Abdoulaye Wade's (2000-2012) tenure], and they would tell you 'I am the president of ROPPA, which represents West African peasant organisations', people would look at you a bit...They'd say, 'here's another smart Senegalese [opportunist]...'. When you go outside the Senegalese context, you see the respect, the honour [with which he is treated] and you [realise]: 'no, this is serious'.³⁷⁷

A web of civil society and institutional actors joined forces with ROPPA in calling for the ECOWAS 5th tariff band. This included Dakar-headquartered ENDA Tiers-Monde (Environmental Development Action in the Third World) and its trade policy branch CACID (African Centre for Trade, Integration, and Development), as well as different branches of Oxfam (Intermon, Novib, Quebec, International). These "provided material, technical and financial support to the peasant organisations to prepare and implement their advocacy platforms" (Blein et al., 2012: 35). ROPPA also worked closely with ECOWAS's Joint CET Committee, composed of UEMOA, ECOWAS, and member countries' trade departments (*Ibid*).

The fundamental actor to successfully push for adoption of the 35% CET, with support from ROPPA and its civil society allies, was ultimately the government of Nigeria (de Roquefeuil et al., 2014). In this, the Nigerian state acted not only to protect its agriculture but also nascent industries. As argued by the President of the National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS), Ken Ukaoha, who would also represent Nigerian civil society in EPA negotiations (see 7.2.3):

In truth, Nigeria's request for a fifth band is a significant matter. It is not only of potential interest to Nigeria, but to all industrially aspiring countries in West Africa. Indeed, it is in the interests of the people of West Africa. For anybody to reject or even argue against the protection of West African producers is tantamount to an economic crime against the citizens of the region. Why must Nigeria continue to import everything it needs without the possibility of self-reliance? [...] Shall Nigeria remain forever under the illusion of donating raw materials to others while importing finished and sometimes, 'decorated' goods? (Ukaoha, 2008:8).

7.2.1.3 The limits of the CET 5th band: how to operationalize food sovereignty beyond fixed tariffs

After 10 years of negotiation, the CET was officially approved by ECOWAS' Heads of State at Praia, Cape Verde, in March 2013, and enforced from January 1st 2015. ROPPA's success in influencing the creation of the new tariff line and its application to most of the region's

³⁷⁷ Interview AR-WA5.

agricultural products is a significant achievement, given how trade policy has historically been impermeable to the influence of rural labouring classes and their organisations in most parts of the world.

However, the 35% CET's effectiveness in sustainably improving rural incomes and food security depends on other agricultural policies to stimulate production and guarantee access to markets. As a fixed tariff, it is also ill-equipped to adjust for global food price volatility, and risks making food more expensive during peaks whenever national production falls below domestic demand and imports become inevitable. This latter argument was used by ECOWAS negotiators as justification to keep the rice (10%) import tariff low.

In that respect, ROPPA had voiced demands for more sophisticated policy mechanisms to protect both family farmers and consumers since the early days of its negotiations with ECOWAS "including through *variable levies* that guarantee entry prices above the average cost of production in the region, [and] *safeguard mechanisms* [applied to] special products" [emphases added] (ROPPA, 2005:7). Safeguard mechanisms have been commonly used during the Doha development round, and "allow developing countries to raise tariffs temporarily during import surges or price falls" (WTO, 2021), especially when price variations are shown to harm agricultural producers. Variable import levies, on the other hand, were one of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) emblematic measures, taken to ensure that European consumers prioritised the purchase of food produced within their territories, and were in place between 1962 and 1994.³⁷⁸ They are considered one of the essential policy mechanisms that enabled post-war Europe to transition from net food importer to self-sufficiency (and frequent overproduction) over a few decades (Oudet, 2013; Berthelot, 2013; Butault, 2004; Pouch and Courleux, 2019).

Whereas the GATT era (1947-1994) allowed exemptions from trade liberalisation for agricultural goods, these were abolished with the creation of the WTO. Hence ROPPA leaders' call at WTO's 10th MC in Nairobi in 2015 to "reauthorise GATT exceptions to allow import protection for agricultural products", one of the "5 WTO rules to change to attain food sovereignty" (ROPPA, 2015:5) presented in a document at parallel press conferences.

³⁷⁸ The EU's variable import levies were later abolished (and replaced by fixed tariffs) to comply with WTO rules (Berthelot, 2013).

ROPPA also called for ECOWAS full membership at the WTO to speak for its 15 members, to give it greater voice in global trade negotiations, and allow it to negotiate higher *bound tariff rates* (i.e. maximum levels allowed) calculated as an average of member states' tariffs. Indeed, WTO rules exceptionally allow for trade tariffs to be raised above previous levels when member states are part of a regional bloc with a common external tariff, provided all of the regional bloc's member states take part in WTO negotiations (technically feasible for ECOWAS after Liberia's accession to the WTO in 2015) (ROPPA, 2015; Dupraz and Postolle, 2010). This would in theory allow many maximum tariffs to be above the CET 35% line with the flexibility of applying lower tariffs whenever international prices soar to avoid internal price surges (ROPPA, 2015).

Indeed, variable import levies allow for prices that are remunerative but also stable for farmers and consumers. Thus national/regional prices for each product would be set for a sufficient duration (e.g. one year) based on studies evaluating both the income needs of farmers and national consumers' purchasing power. For instance, imported rice sold below a set ECOWAS reference price would be taxed at the difference between reference price and sale price. However, if rice were to be imported and sold above the ECOWAS reference price, then no levy would be paid, since local rice would be automatically cheaper. Import levies would therefore vary according to the fluctuations of international commodity prices, in order to make any imported food sold internally available at an either equal or more expensive - but never cheaper - price than national produce. This would enable to introduce price stability in national/regional agricultural markets, and internally curb global price volatility. Variable import levies would, in sum, enable to set prices that are sufficiently high for West African food producers, yet still low enough for their consumers (Oudet, 2013; Berthelot, 2013).

In that respect, variable import levies are a superior policy instrument to fixed tariffs, in that they can potentially cement an articulated class alliance joining small and medium family farmers (food producers) with the urban-rural semi-proletariat and lower middle classes of West African cities (food consumers), instead of pitting the former against the latter. The formulation of these policy proposals was enabled by a ROPPA leadership conscious of the need to bridge differences between these different West African classes and class fractions. It also reveals ROPPA's capacity to build alliances with progressive intellectuals and experts in order to pierce

through the often-intractable complexities of international trade rules. This enabled ROPPA to show ECOWAS negotiators that there is an unexplored margin for manoeuvre even within restrictive international trade rules, with technically feasible policy paths that can pave the way for territorially articulated regional integration.

The above-described initiatives are part of what ROPPA's president Ibrahima Coulibaly means by 'operationalizing food sovereignty':

On food sovereignty, we explained [to Via Campesina comrades] that we are the first to have [included the term] in policies. But that this did not solve our problems. And that creating it as a slogan was not of great use. Even if you obtain this in a law or in a Constitution, you must develop operational instruments, of implementation, on a day-to-day basis. Here lies the difficulty. [...] We are convinced that food sovereignty is not obtained globally at once. It is obtained piece by piece. And for that, one must really fight for instruments – for trade tariffs, tax rises, for public investments in certain areas – these kinds of things.³⁷⁹

The approved 35% ECOWAS CET became one such instrument. However, given the CET's limitations, and the unwillingness or incapacity of ECOWAS negotiators to take on board ROPPA's variable import levy proposals, it soon became clear that trade policy had to be looked at beyond trade tariffs.

7.2.2 The ECOWAS Rice Offensive and other food import substitution initiatives

The political and economic consequences of the 2008 food price crisis in West Africa compelled its countries to prioritise production increases in key staples, and thereby reduce dependency on extra-regional imports. Some had encouraging results from the outset. A member of Benin's PNOPPA pointed this out:

Experience has shown that when small producers are supported, they are able to express their potential [...]. In 2008, when there was the rice crisis, producers became conscious that we cannot continue depending on rice coming from overseas. And [when] governments at that time accompanied small producers to have access to inputs, fertilisers, factors of production [...] after 2008 [...], in 2009 already, Benin had a surplus in certain grains. Benin gave maize to Togo and Niger. That means that if we truly support, actors are capable of many things.³⁸⁰

Most West African countries launched food self-sufficiency policies in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis. However, unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the diverging interests of family farmers and urban consumers exposed contradictions between national agricultural (support to

³⁷⁹ Interview AO-WA22.

³⁸⁰ Interview AO-WA19.

rice production) and regional trade (low rice tariff) policies. WA countries import about half of the region's consumed rice from Asian producers (Hathie, 2017; Blancher et al., 2020) (see Figure 23). But, as mentioned by ROPPA's current president, Mali's Ibrahima Coulibaly, rice importers are a powerful lobby throughout WA:

In [countries] whose markets were liberalised by the World Bank, [...] traders developed links with politicians. So politicians in power were very much linked with these traders who imported food, particularly rice [...]. This is not only the case in Mali, but also in many West African countries, [where] rice imports fund the political parties in power [...]. And because of that, if you look, whenever a regime changes, the big rice importers change as well. Since rice is very consumed in the cities, it is really a financial windfall for the parties that take power in Africa. So that means it is the biggest problem that we have. It is not that we cannot be self-sufficient. It is not that we cannot feed ourselves. It is precisely because there are barriers to decisions that may enable us to reach those goals.³⁸¹

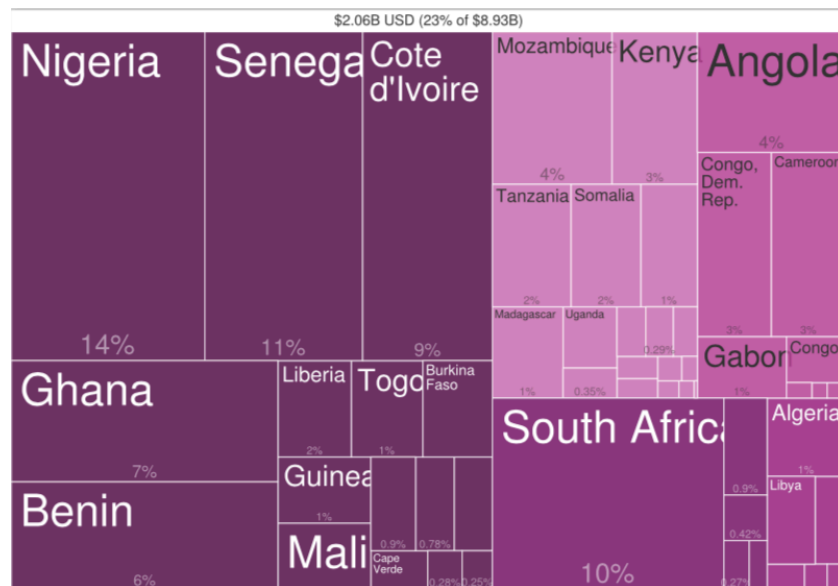


Figure 23: African Rice imports in 2004, representing 23% of global rice imports, of which more than half are from West Africa³⁸².

(Source: Atlas of Economic Complexity, 2017).

One of ECOWAP's priorities is self-sufficiency in rice. Hence, the ECOWAS-approved "Regional Offensive for sustained recovery of rice production in West Africa" aims to produce 25 million tons of milled rice by 2025 to feed the West African region. Negotiated with ROPPA as a type of compensation for the low rice CET,³⁸³ the strategy has the four following axes: (i)

³⁸¹ Interview AO-WA22.

³⁸² West African countries are in darker purple, on the left side of the diagram.

³⁸³ Interview AO-WA10.

sustained increase in rice production; (ii) processing and value addition to local rice; (iii) promotion of the rice regional market; (iv) improvement of the rice production environment (Hathie, 2017).

The origins of the ECOWAS rice initiative lie in ROPPA's creation in 2011 of a permanent 'claimed space' joining together national member rice producers in a specific regional policy dialogue space (CRCOPR)³⁸⁴ (ROPPA, 2011). Supported by ROPPA, Africa Rice, Hub Rural, with EU funding, CRCOPR aimed to influence ECOWAS through its promotion of alternative trade protection measures after the 10% CET defeat in 2013.³⁸⁵

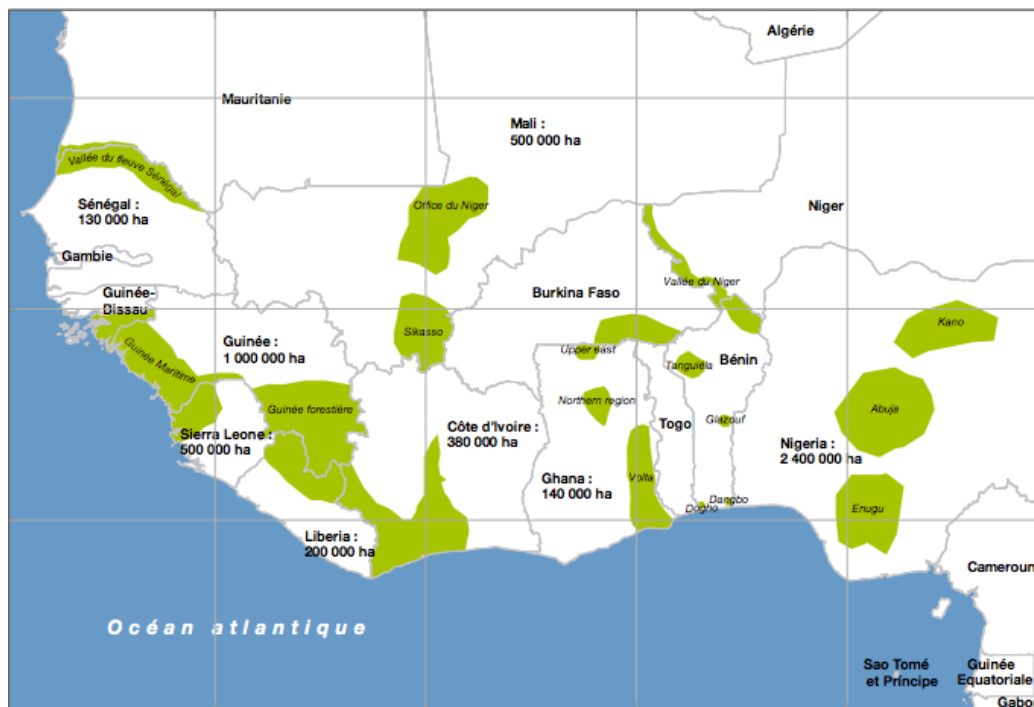


Figure 24: Main Rice Producing Basins in West Africa.
(Source: Inter-Réseaux, 2016).

Their focus was on complementary trade policy measures. As explained by a senior IPAR researcher who collaborated with ROPPA on these initiatives:

ROPPA tasked CRCOPR to think of other modalities to attenuate the problems due to the weak CET. That's when we started to think about certain modalities, including the promotion of institutional purchases [...].

³⁸⁴ *Conseil Régional de Concertation des Organisations de Producteurs de Riz d'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Regional Concertation Council of West African Rice Producer Organisations).

³⁸⁵ Interview AR-WA4.

ROPPA's idea was to locate several experiences and go to ECOWAS to negotiate so that ECOWAS would publish guidelines for governments to scale up what was being done in some countries. For instance on institutional purchases [...] Mali [and] Benin have done a lot [...]. The other example was to see what Nigeria did. Nigeria made use of safeguard measures [...]. But UEMOA countries could not use these, because they already had low tariffs, while Nigeria had high tariffs, so they could implement these.³⁸⁶

Beyond safeguard measures or government procurement, experience from within ROPPA national platform members pointed at how producers of specific crops were able to put pressure, negotiate, and convince government authorities of adopting fine-tuned policies that regulated imports of those crops, in ways that favoured both family farmers and consumers.

Hence, in Guinea, members of the Fouta-Djalon Producers' Federation³⁸⁷ (FPFD), affiliated to Guinea's national ROPPA platform CNOP-G, obtained a seasonal import ban on potatoes, between February-June of each year, when local potatoes are sold in the country's markets. In parallel, it introduced different varieties to spread production throughout the whole year, and expanded cultivation in lowland areas. FPFD were also able to negotiate with local merchants for national potatoes to be sold at lower prices than imported ones. The virtuous circle of increased investment in production while safeguarding national market access resulted in considerable output rise, enabling Guinea's potato family farmers to even sell their surplus to neighbouring Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Senegal (Blein et al., 2012). Thus, diversification investments in production combined with fine-tuned regulations on imports and direct negotiations with merchants in national markets was demonstrated to pay off by FPFD's experience in Guinea.

Similar temporary import restrictions were used to put a brake on onion imports in Senegal by invoking the WTO's special safeguards clause, given that the influxes of imports were driving prices down, hurting national producers. In 2003, imports were interrupted during the peak of national production (March-May), but after national traders stocked up on imported onions before the ban's entry into force, import quotas were introduced in the preceding months from 2007 onwards. This enabled a rise in onion producer prices *and* national production (from 70.000 to 120.000 tonnes between 2003-2007) (Blein et al., 2012).

³⁸⁶ Interview AR-WA4.

³⁸⁷ *Fédération des Producteurs du Fouta-Djalon*.

Momentum generated by national governments' efforts towards self-sufficiency, given an additional push by the ECOWAS Rice Offensive, has generated considerable rises in production. Though for most crops, post-2008 increases in West African output reflects mostly surface expansion, in the case of rice it also reflects higher yields (particularly in Nigeria and Senegal), a sign of the considerable public investments channelled towards self-sufficiency initiatives (Inter-Réseaux, 2016). For instance, Mali – the region's second largest rice producer after Nigeria – for the first time was able to fully supply its internal market with rice produced within its borders in 2016 (Commodafrica, 2016). However, throughout West Africa high demographic rates add to the challenge of national food production increases translating into self-sufficiency. Thus despite a significant regional production increase over recent years, the region still imports nearly half of its consumed rice (Blancher et al., 2020).

The incoherence of food self-sufficiency initiatives is pointed out by an interviewed Senegalese trade policy expert, as support to national production continues to run in tandem with under-taxed cheap imports:

In Senegal, [for rice] they are now talking about a 100 billion CFA [US 170 million] import bill. These are financial resources running down the drain. So they've put everything in place to try to put an end to this [import dependency]. But the question is, when you have policies aimed at ensuring self-sufficiency – hence, national production – but instead you put all kinds of fiscal incentives in place to facilitate imports, what are you actually looking for?³⁸⁸

The persistence of cheap imports have exposed the difficulties of selling to national markets despite a greater capacity to supply these. This has led Senegalese rice producers to seek negotiation with government officials in view of finding mechanisms to regulate rice imports and prevent these from harming national production, while still allowing importers to fill the demand gap not covered by local rice.

By demonstrating to the Senegalese government how its significant investments in rice production were being laid to waste by excessive rice imports, producer organisations (most of them affiliated to CNCR) in northern Senegal (Daouda, Diagne, 2008) successfully pressured the government to 'couple' rice imports with local purchases. Along with other actors of the rice

³⁸⁸ Interview AR-WA5.

processing and distribution chain, grouped together in the National Interprofessional Committee for Local Rice (CIRIZ), producers negotiated a mechanism with importers/distributors and the government, whereby the amount of rice that each importer is allowed to purchase from abroad (through import quotas³⁸⁹ delivered by government authorities) is based on the equivalent proportion of nationally produced rice that they have previously purchased from Senegalese farmers³⁹⁰ (Hathie, 2017).

ROPPA's President of Honour Mamadou Cissokho thus summed up national AOs' above-described initiatives:

Cities are the [locus of the] lower middle class. And since cities were created by colonisers, they made them eat rice. So the rice eating habit is urban. And so governments [...] cannot risk putting a high import tariff on rice. But what we have asked, is that the government put a large sum of money to develop rice production. [...] If we can be assured that the region can produce 80% [of the rice it consumes] we agreed to that [...]. Because here many peasants' children have settled in the city peripheries. So the price of rice and the price of bread can bring revolt in the cities. [...] We'll arrive at a point where the government will say 'as long as Senegalese rice is not finished, we don't import'. We're doing that with onions. We're going to do it with potatoes.

National production incentives coordinated with finely-tuned limits on importers' authorisations to purchase foreign produce (as shown for the examples of potatoes, onions, and rice) have amounted to successful processes of gradual food import substitution. This has been driven by mobilisation and participation from members of ROPPA national platforms in dialogue with key economic and political actors. Through careful and negotiated steering of private actors' activities, Senegal's coupling of rice imports with local purchases, or Guinea's seasonal import bans and price regulation on potatoes demonstrate the significance of agrarian organisations' dialogue across product chains for trade policy influence.

The above-cited examples reveal how local organisations affiliated to ROPPA national platforms have been able to negotiate specific types of protection mechanisms, through dialogue with actors across chains, including processors, importers, distributors, and local merchants, as well as governments. This has enabled to bridge apparently irreconcilable interests between national producers and consumers, by fine-tuning different policy instruments, beyond fixed

³⁸⁹ Import quotas are based on calculations of the country's yearly import needs (incorporating total national rice production and expected demand).

³⁹⁰ Interview AR-WA4.

import tariffs. These have proven that when correctly protected against foreign competition and internally supported, gradual food import substitution processes that surmount the contradictions of internal food production support and low trade tariffs are possible.

However, these examples are exceptions, corresponding to the production and distribution chains that are better organised and capitalised within each West African country. Moreover, while in some cases, such as safeguard mechanisms against import surges, these specific trade policies are in conformity with the WTO, in others, such as coupling rice imports with national purchases, this might not necessarily be the case^{391, 392}. This reconnects with ROPPA's resistance to the controversial EU-EPAs, and with the EU's request for WA to open its markets to European goods as per a WTO ruling (see 7.2 introduction).

As with the first two trade policy battlegrounds examined here (CET 35% tariff line, and food import substitution initiatives), ROPPA's struggle against the EPAs would also reveal, albeit in different ways, how international trade rules were upon closer examination open to a much wider variety of interpretations and policy options than was initially apparent, and that using these in the interest of West African family farmers crucially depended on the building of a sufficiently wide and united regional class alliance.

7.2.3 Resisting the extra-regional EPA agreements

7.2.3.1 EPAs institutionalisation of colonially-inherited unequal terms of trade

The fundamental inequity of the terms under which the EU's EPAs were negotiated with their ACP trading partners was vehemently denounced by prominent West African CSOs. These would give trade tariff exemptions on about 75% of EU exports to West Africa, to be phased in within a 20-year timeframe, in exchange for immediate ACP tariff free market access to the EU. Yet ACP countries already had tariff-free access to the EU market under the Lomé Convention. In other words, they had nothing new to gain from the EPAs. Moreover, two decades were deemed

³⁹¹ Interview AR-WA4.

³⁹² Interview AR-WA4.

insufficient for West African producers to be able to compete on equal terms with their European counterparts (Berthelot, 2013; Dembélé, 2016).

For agricultural goods, EPA conditions included tariff free access for 34% of the food bill imported by WA from the EU, including almost all grains and milk powder, submitting already strained West African producers of those commodities under even fiercer competition (ROPPA, 2015). WA states would also lose precious fiscal resources. According to some estimates, tariff free access for EU goods would strip least developed country (LDC) African states of customs revenues on up to 11 billion euros of imports (Berthelot, 2014; Dembélé, 2016).

7.2.3.2 The EU's strategy of dividing West Africa between its two major agricultural exporters and their neighbours

A negotiated EPA was nevertheless signed in 2014 by most ECOWAS member states (and initialled by Gambia, Mauritania and Nigeria³⁹³) at the 45th ECOWAS meeting held in Accra, Ghana. Given that West African countries had a lot to lose and little to gain from these agreements, what led their governments to sign them? Although the EU's commitment to negotiate EPAs with ACP countries through their regional blocs was presented as a way to strengthen these, part of its negotiators' strategy was to sow divisions within African regional organisations, by pressuring the minority of countries that stood the most to lose by not signing the EPAs. In the case of West Africa these countries were Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

The EU's *Everything but Arms* (EBA) initiative grants LDCs tariff free access to the European market for any non-military goods as of 2001. This was at the root of Senegal's successful government strategy to be downgraded from *lower middle income* to *least developed* country at the time, and gain tariff free access to the EU.³⁹⁴ LDCs would therefore not lose preferential market access after expiry of the Lomé Convention, and did not have anything to gain from negotiating a new trade agreement with the EU (Berthelot, 2013).

³⁹³ Although Nigeria initialled the agreement on that occasion, the country did not subsequently sign and ratify it.

³⁹⁴ Interviews CS-WA5 and CS-WA7.

This was not the case for WA's non-LDC countries Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Cape Verde. Côte d'Ivoire, the region's second largest economy and first agricultural exporter (accounting for 53% of West Africa's agricultural exports in 2007) (Blein et al., 2008) was the country that had the most to lose from the end of preferential access to the European market. Ghana, West Africa's second largest agricultural exporter (averaging 20% of the region's agricultural exports) (Chatham House, 2020) was the other country most inclined to sign the EPAs. The predominant weight of these two countries in global cocoa and coffee exports (see Figure 25 below) made the issue particularly sensitive. Indeed, cocoa, and to a lesser extent coffee and tea, were the key exports that historically benefitted from non-reciprocal trade with Europe – representing more than 40% of total ACP-Europe agricultural exports in the 1980s and early 1990s, and still close to 30% in the early 2000s (Ribier, 2007).

Who exported Cocoa beans in 2017?

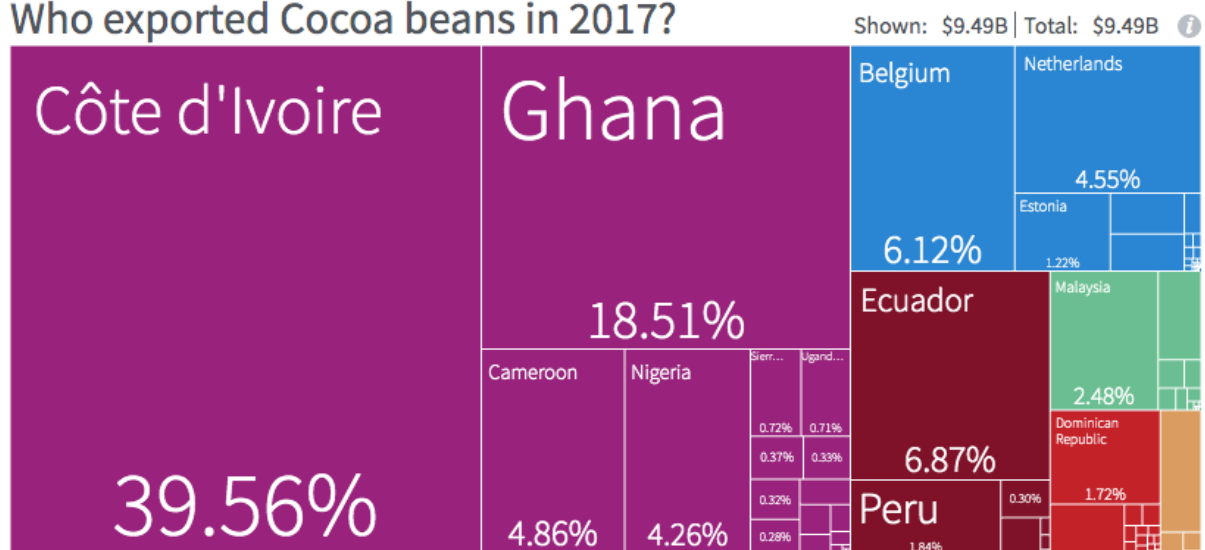


Figure 25: Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana account for nearly two thirds of global cocoa exports³⁹⁵.
(Source: Atlas of Economic Complexity, 2017).

Nigeria, on the other hand, is a relatively smaller agricultural exporter (averaging a tenth or less of the region's agricultural exports), compared with the country's economic and

³⁹⁵ However, despite controlling about 60% of the global raw cocoa market, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire “both continue to be price takers, competing for what the [Ghanaian] finance ministry estimates is just \$6bn of a \$140bn chocolate market dominated by multinationals” (Pilling, 2018:2), a sour reminder of often short term considerations on market share in raw materials compares with long term ones on investment in processing and value addition, something often pointed out by agro-industrial processors in West Africa opposed to the EPAs.

demographic weight in West Africa (72% of GDP and 52% of the population in 2016). Differently from its two neighbours, Nigeria's balance of payments hardly depends on agricultural exports, given the predominant role of oil in maintaining its trade surplus, combined with its huge internal market for agricultural products (Chatham House, 2020; Berthelot, 2018).

With preferential treatment expiring by 1st January 2008, West Africa's non-LDCs would fall back under the EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP),³⁹⁶ applied to all developing countries: Côte d'Ivoire's exports would be taxed on average at 27% of their value (equivalent to € 700 million) and Ghana's at 25% (€ 240 million) instead of 0% under ACP tariff free access (Hazard, 2007). Ivorian and Ghanaian government negotiators were thus left with little choice but to initial the so-called *interim* EPA (iEPA) bilateral agreements with the EU in December 2007.³⁹⁷

Representatives of those countries' export-sensitive sectors certainly felt the pressure, and urged their governments to sign the iEPAs. Ivorian and Ghanaian horticulture, fishing and timber alone were estimated to bear two-thirds of potential tariff rises (Hazard, 2007). With a sizeable representation of peasant family farmers working in agro-export chains (coffee, cocoa, banana, pineapple, mango), Côte d'Ivoire's National Association of Professional Agricultural Organisations³⁹⁸ (ANOPACI) became ROPPA's only national platform to plead in favour of the EPAs (D'Achon, Gérard, 2010; Guèye, 2007).

ANOPACI's former president, Ngoan Aka Mathias, who led its member organisation OCAB³⁹⁹ (Central Organisation of Producers, Exporters of Pineapples and Bananas) and was himself a pineapple producer, declared to the press:

Why should Côte d'Ivoire sacrifice the existence of more than 50.000 workers in [the] banana [sector] and their families, in the name of regional solidarity? What has this solidarity done concretely for us? What will it do for us tomorrow, when we won't be able to pay Europe's trade tariffs? [...]. I am a peasant. I only believe in what I see. And what I see for now, is that the EU doesn't want to retreat, and it has even informed us of the tariff levels that will be applied to our products after the expiry of the Cotonou agreement [...]. European customs services have informed banana producers of Côte d'Ivoire [...] that they will have to pay 176 euros per ton of exported banana. (Guèye, 2007: 3-4).

³⁹⁶ Not to be confused with the more favourable GSP+ conditions (see below).

³⁹⁷ Côte d'Ivoire followed through and signed its iEPA on November 2008, but ratified it in August 2016. Ghana would only sign its iEPA on July 2016, before ratifying it also in August 2016. Nigeria chose not to negotiate a bilateral iEPA, and as of 1 January 2008 its exports to the EU are taxed under the less favourable GSP terms (Bilal and Braun-Munzinger, 2008).

³⁹⁸ *Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire.*

³⁹⁹ *Organisation Centrale des Producteurs Exportateurs d'Ananas et de Bananes.*

Similar arguments were made by non-ROPPA Ghanaian pineapple and banana exporters. The Ghanaian president of the African Pineapples and Bananas Association (APIBANA) which represents Ivorian, Ghanaian and Cameroonian producers, pressed for his country's urgent signature of the EU trade agreements (Quartey, 2012). Yet these positions were a small minority among WA civil society represented organisations. Most other farmer organisations, small or large, were against the EPAs, as were most WA industrial associations. This was even true within Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, given most of their other agricultural and industrial produce were primarily destined to internal markets.

Hence ROPPA's Ghanaian national platform FONG, composed mainly of smaller-scale family farmers and devoid of major agricultural exporters like its Ivorian counterpart, were not surprisingly against the EPAs (McSween, 2015). Even ANOPACI member organisations such as the Union of Poultry Farmers of Côte d'Ivoire (UACI)⁴⁰⁰ (Amoakon, 2007) or Ghana's non-FONG larger-scale National Association of Poultry Farmers (GNAPF) (McSween, 2015) denounced the impossibility of competing with highly subsidised European poultry, which would arrive on WA markets tariff free if EPAs were ratified.

As other actors opposed to the EPAs, Ghana's poultry farmers' organisation instead suggested the inclusion of their country into the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) which grants lower middle income countries' exports to the EU tariff free access, provided those countries implement 27 international conventions (on human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, and governance). Extending GSP+ to West Africa's three lower middle-income countries (besides Cape Verde, which is already part of the scheme) would enable these to maintain tariff free access to the European market for the bulk of their sensitive goods, without having to indiscriminately open their own markets to highly subsidised European products (Berthelot, 2018).

In the first phase of EPA negotiations (2005-2007), ROPPA and other civil society actors managed to: i) convince West African negotiators to refuse signing an agreement by the end of 2007, and ii) have ECOWAS propose a market access offer with varying timeframes for trade

⁴⁰⁰ *Union des Aviculteurs de Côte d'Ivoire.*

liberalisation according to differentiated degrees of sensitivity. This enabled to buy time for further ECOWAS-EU negotiations without changes in WA countries' EU market access, which was hailed as a significant victory at the time (Blein et al., 2012).

Yet after Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana's initialling of separate interim EPAs in 2007, ROPPA and its allies made new counter-proposals to the ECOWAS Commission and member states, aimed at accommodating the tropical exporting countries' concerns. In a memorandum published after an ECOWAS ministerial meeting (held on 3-7 May 2010 in Bamako), ROPPA and other West African civil society networks pressed "political authorities of the region to bring all the necessary support to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to prevent them from having to implement their individual EPAs, or find economic instruments that may temporarily compensate for the losses which they would face on the European market" (POSCAO-AC, 2010:24).

Despite all of the above efforts, largely short term economic and political concerns led most ECOWAS countries to sign the EPAs in 2014. ROPPA's post-EPA signature statement highlighted its members' perplexity as to why ECOWAS had not given more careful consideration to the proposed mechanisms to compensate for the two tropical agricultural exporters' projected revenue losses (ROPPA, 2014). As reported by a CNCR technical advisor:

You know, with the EPA, the Europeans immediately attacked – I'm not sure if I should say the 'weakest links' – but they started bullying Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. They said: "if you don't sign, the agreements we have on coffee, cocoa, you will lose them". So the unity that you had at ECOWAS level begins to crumble, because these countries have no other choice. And we'd made the calculations amongst West African civil society. We had said "but, listen, these states should be solidary and be ready to pay for what Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana will lose when they refuse to sign". But do the other states have that consciousness? That's the difficulty in creating alliances.⁴⁰¹

The EU's strategy of exacerbating divergences between EU-dependent agricultural export interests of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana with the rest of the region ended up prevailing: those two countries ratified their iEPAs by August 2016, after again being threatened with losing preferential access to the EU market by October 1st 2016 if they did not sign. However, with Nigeria making it clear that it would not sign the EPA agreements, the ECOWAS EPA was defeated. But Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana interim EPAs consequently became permanent, and now threaten the ECOWAS regional integration project, given that most EU goods will eventually arrive in those

⁴⁰¹ Interview AO-WA7/AO-WA12.

two countries tariff free, and other ECOWAS countries will have to raise tariffs towards Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to avoid potential re-exporting on a massive scale between those two countries and the rest of the region (Berthelot, 2018).

7.2.3.3 ROPPA's key role in West Africa's wide anti-EPA regional class alliance

The anti-EPA coalition was a broad network of organisations representing a wide range of economic interests – a significant effort in creating an articulated regional class alliance, which combined mobilisation in claimed spaces and participation in invited spaces. Besides ROPPA and its urban civil society intellectual middle-class allies from WA and Europe (NGOs, researchers, technical advisors), industrial sectors across the region played a crucial role. Their combined efforts first influenced the region's countries to initially refuse signing the EPAs in 2007, secondly delayed the negotiation process until most countries signed in 2014, and thirdly formed a sufficiently strong rampart to convince Nigeria to effectively bury the ECOWAS regional EPA.

ROPPA's alliance was strongest with Nigerian industrial sectors, which benefitted from the African continent's largest economy *and* population, a sizeable internal market, and growing resources directed towards industrialisation from the Nigerian state's oil exporting rent. Nigeria would stand most to lose, not only from unequal competition against its nascent industrial sector, but also in import duty revenues – which in turn constitute precious fiscal resources for its public investment and industrialisation strategy. The National Association of Nigerian Traders' (NANTs) were particularly vocal in their opposition to the EPAs (D'Achon, Gérard, 2010).

ROPPA's President of Honour Mamadou Cissokho summarised ROPPA's strategy to influence the EPA process (and in particular CNCR in Senegal) as follows:

In 2000, we had the Cotonou Agreements, which replaced the Lomé Agreements. [...] I was a member of the EU-ACP Economic and Social Committee, from 2000 to 2005. So they said, we will negotiate, but the deadline is 2007. They started in 2005, in the end. [In Senegal] the battle of CNCR took us to 2016 [when the country signed]. We mobilised. But chiefly, we did national workshops where we reached 50 to 100 of our members, who understood [the issues at stake and strategies to adopt], and the press, and also many people – retired, civil servants, etc.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰² Interview AO-WA10.

Senegal's 'No to EPAs' coalition, which besides CNCR, included entrepreneurs, union leaders, and urban civil society, grew from 2005 onwards, when the EU-EPA negotiations really got under way. One of their key arguments was the fact that most of the country's exports go to other WA countries rather than to outside regions, and that favouring EU imports is detrimental to intra-regional trade, contrary to EU negotiators' discourse who claim the EPAs are a boon to WA regional integration. Thirteen Senegalese labour unions released a declaration entitled 'No to the sinking of African integration', as civil society organisations in different WA countries organised demonstrations in their main cities against the EPAs (see Figure 26 below) (Lejecos, 2015).



Figure 26: Anti-EPA Demonstration by ROPPA's Burkinan national platform CPF.⁴⁰³
(Source: ROPPA, 2014).

The continent-wide African Industrial Association (AIA) formally manifested its firm rejection of any trade deal with Europe based on reciprocal trade conditions, perceived as the death knell for any serious attempt at African industrialisation. The AIA launched an anti-EPA petition on 24 April 2007, signed by nearly 80 francophone African CEOs from the continent's largest industrial and agro-industrial firms:

⁴⁰³ *Confédération Paysanne du Faso*. Demonstration sign translation: 'No to EPAs without Food Sovereignty'.

The major challenge for AIA today [...] is the industrialisation of the continent which is an essential factor in creating wealth and jobs [...]. No viable and strong economy has developed without protection. This is the case for the US, Europe, Japan and China, among others. It cannot be different for Africa today. We urge negotiators to leave their meeting rooms and go to the field to fully appreciate the difficulties faced by African industrialists (AIA, 2007, cited by Blein et al., 2012:41).

West African AIA members signing the petition include significant agro-industrial sectors, such as Senegal's tomato concentrate producer SOCAS (Senegal Canned Food Company⁴⁰⁴), Mali's state-owned cotton enterprise CMDT (Malian Company for Textile Development⁴⁰⁵), or processing and packing Ivorian group IPS (Industrial Promotion Services), which together employ a significant parcel of the region's formal urban workers (Maury, 2007). The AIA's petition added to ROPPA and urban civil society calls to defeat signature of the EPA at its originally planned 2007 deadline at the Africa/EU Lisbon summit held on 6 December of that year (D'Achon, Gérard, 2010, Dembélé, 2016).

However, the industrial sector in Africa at the time represented only about 5% of Africa's 500 largest African enterprises – dominated by oil, mining and distribution sectors (Maury, 2007). Despite its small weight in the country's economy, the Nigerian industrial sector, with its access to a large internal market and increased support via a state-led industrialisation strategy, proved crucial in preventing EPAs from being ratified by the West African regional power, and thus by ECOWAS as a whole.

As stated by ROPPA's Malian leader Ibrahima Coulibaly, "all of the independent studies and analyses showed that EPA agreements [...] would have negative impacts on *customs revenue*, *agriculture* and *industry* in the region [emphases added]" (Coulibaly, 2007, cited by Blein et al., 2012:41). Coulibaly's declaration summarised the three main constituencies that mobilised against EPAs, i.e. those who stood most to lose from the loss of national fiscal resources and internal regional market access: i) the Nigerian state and largest ECOWAS importer, ii) industrial sectors across the ECOWAS region, and iii) peasant family farmers represented by ROPPA.

⁴⁰⁴ *Société de Conserves Alimentaires au Sénégal.*

⁴⁰⁵ *Compagnie Malienne de Développement des Textiles.*

Conclusion

COPROFAM and ROPPA's strategies to influence trade policy in the regional invited spaces to which they had access led to different outcomes. COPROFAM's push to defend family farming from extra-regional trade agreements contributed to creating REAF, a combination of permanent regional and national invited spaces for FF policy deliberation in South America. While COPROFAM's attempts to influence extra and intra-regional trade policies failed to materialise, ROPPA's campaigns, alliances with urban sectors of society across its region, and commissioning of studies to qualify participation in regional trade policy debates enabled it to significantly influence regional trade negotiations through active participation in different ECOWAS spaces.

COPROFAM and ROPPA both faced difficulties in reflecting the diversity of peasant family farmers' trade policy priorities and at times conflicting interests between (and even within) their national member organisations. South American Pampa grain and meat (e.g. Argentina) and West African tropical coastal coffee, cocoa, and fruit (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire) middle-farmer export-driven interests, could not be easily reconciled with the national/intra-regional market prioritisation of smaller-scale peasant constituencies that make up the bulk of COPROFAM and ROPPA's membership. The recent renegotiation of export tax measures between Argentina's incoming government administration and FAA as of early 2020, and the gradual entry into force of interim EPA agreements in Côte d'Ivoire through tariff exemptions for imports from the EU as of 2019 – both show the continuing relevance of these pressing challenges. But the permanence of FAA and ANOPACI as active members of their respective regional networks serve to demonstrate how the latter can function as a force for unity even in the face of such critically divisive issues.

Different types of alliances were struck in order to influence trade policies in their respective regions. ROPPA's alliance with fledgling industrial sectors of West Africa, particularly Nigeria's, and a growing urban consumer population has enabled to push the West African policy agenda towards food import substitution and intra-regional market integration, despite the huge challenges ahead. South American progressive governments' dependency on landed elites and export agribusiness (e.g. balance of payments surplus, fiscal capacity for public policies) during

the 2000-2014 commodity boom restricted COPROFAM's push for special and differential treatment of family farmers in international trade. Nevertheless, policies aiming to increase local and national market access, such as public purchase programmes for food security, were diffused across the region through REAF's regional/national interfaces.

ROPPA's successful pressing for approval of the ECOWAS 35% tariff band, the ECOWAS Regional Rice Offensive, as well as West African civil society's campaign against EPA agreements all contributed towards creating a new trade vision in West Africa, whose implementation is slow and uneven, but shows signs of permanence in the medium to long term. COPROFAM's recognition of family farmers as an active constituency of MERCOSUR's agricultural trade policy benefited from a strong initial push, but its long-term vision was interrupted by the end of progressive governments and commodity boom cycle in the mid 2010s. Still, the creation of public purchase policies represented significant gains for family farming and food and nutrition security across the region and beyond.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This thesis has looked at how regional agrarian organisations' policy demands on land, labour, and trade have been articulated by COPROFAM and ROPPA members at three scales of policy dialogue in South America and West Africa: regional, national, and local. The relative strengths and weaknesses of different class and territorial alliances weaved around each policy process have been examined in light of varying degrees of success in shifting policy narratives, achieving approval of key legal norms, and influencing public budgetary allocations for the strengthening of peasant family farming.

8.1 Three policy processes across two regions: summarizing the comparison

Regarding land, these have sprung as policy counter-proposals to externally-led policy narratives aiming to further privatize and buy up land for financial speculation or delocalised food production. Though neither COPROFAM nor ROPPA managed to have regional norms approved on land policy, discussions towards these enabled policy diffusion processes to take place amongst each region's countries. Laws that aim to prevent or reverse land concentration by regulating land transfers were approved in some countries, with mixed and uncertain results. Yet it is chiefly when pushed by agrarian organisations' actions at local level (land occupations in South America, village consultations in West Africa) that furthest land policy gains have been made.

Regarding labour, agrarian organisations have represented their constituencies at regional policy dialogues as peasant (and indigenous) family farmers, a specific social category defying urban-centric employer/employee representation in both South America and West Africa. COPROFAM and ROPPA's involvement in policy dialogues in key pioneer countries in the 1990s have been followed in the 2000s by regionally diffused policy initiatives that established precise criteria to legally define *family farms* as family or community units of self-managed rural labourers working the land, through a MERCOSUR official norm in South America, and through ROPPA's network of national platforms in West Africa. Significant implementation advances in South America have nonetheless faced challenges in equally attending a widely differentiated

spectrum of family farmers. In West Africa, family farming policies continue to channel only minor portions of national budgets, despite persisting rural demographic majorities.

Regarding trade, an area in which regional integration blocs usually have their strongest policy attributions, MERCOSUR and ECOWAS both underwent negotiation processes with external trade partners under generally unfavourable conditions for peasant family farmers. Although COPROFAM was not able to prevent approval of a MERCOSUR-EU trade agreement, ROPPA's broad regional alliance has until now prevented a full signature of ECOWAS's EPA with the EU. Efforts at promoting family farmers' intra-regional trade in South America have faltered, in no small part due to wide differences in national family farmer registries' implementation rates between neighbouring countries. They were relatively more successful in West Africa, where an important milestone was reached in approving a higher fixed tariff line in ECOWAS for most family farming produce. In both regions, more immediate gains were enabled by national policy levers to reserve internal markets for peasant family farmers, primarily through regionally diffused public purchase programmes in South America, and various nationally-negotiated food import substitution mechanisms in West Africa.

Hence, in the three policy processes, RAO participation enabled to create or strengthen public policies to support FF insofar as it translated regional claims into cross-national policy diffusion processes, and locally-embedded initiatives. The use of common policy discursive frames across three regional scales served to give cohesion throughout diverse policy dialogue spaces. Wherever regional class territorial alliances were either too narrow or fractious, policy processes faltered. Where they were sufficiently wide and cohesive, they generated virtuous intra-regional policy diffusion dynamics.

The tracing of COPROFAM and ROPPA's alternative policy strategies on land, labour, and trade, has revealed a propositional dimension of AOs capable of negotiating concrete gains for their constituencies, pointing towards combined strategies of mobilisation and resistance on the one hand, and policy proposition and negotiation on the other. Despite their limitations, the approval of regional norms recognizing family farming in South America and enabling agricultural trade protection in West Africa, in addition to unfinished regional land policy initiatives, point towards possible paths forward (see 8.3).

8.2 Relevance of regional agrarian organisation policy dialogues

The relevance for agrarian organisations to organize at the regional level has been confirmed by the policy process comparative study on several grounds. Firstly, because increasingly, decisions relating to agriculture and trade issues are decided at the regional (or bi-regional negotiations) level. Extra-regional and intra-regional negotiations held at MERCOSUR or ECOWAS level demonstrate this in the few concrete gains, however limited, that local and national organisations affiliated to COPROFAM and ROPPA achieved on the international trade policy front.

Second, the regional scale still has much less decisional power and policy impact than the national scale. Precisely for that reason, however, the regional scale allows for more space for agrarian organisations to deliberate than in many of their corresponding national contexts. Regional policy norms, decisions and programmes have thus flowed back to the national level, albeit with more intensity in South America than West Africa, and with variable degrees of enforcement capacity.

Third, even when regional initiatives falter, or approved norms fail to compel national governments to apply them, regional dialogue spaces have contributed to strengthen policy networks between neighbouring countries. This has created conditions for policy diffusion to occur across countries, as the regional land policy process particularly illustrates in both regions. Multiple examples of the formation of these regional policy diffusion networks are also shown by the labour and trade policy processes, whether these networks are formed in mostly state-sponsored regional dialogues (as in South America) or predominantly externally-funded ones (as in West Africa).

Fourth, not only is the regional scale better shielded from national class conflict and alliance dynamics, but also from political alternations of power between progressive or conservative governments, particularly because alternations usually occur in some but not all of a region's countries simultaneously. The latter half of the 2010s in South America illustrates this,

given the continuity of REAF despite neoliberal restoration attempts in all of MERCOSUR's countries at different moments. Similarly, in West Africa, despite not being represented with agrarian organisations within ROPPA, the Nigerian government's key role in ECOWAS has enabled to put brakes on further trade liberalisation in the region.

Fifth, where discussions have not made significant headway on policy issues themselves (such as trade in South America or labour in West Africa) they have contributed to opening permanent dialogue spaces on issues that require longer term regional policy processes. Hence, the value that agrarian organisations' place on maintaining regional policy dialogue spaces active is revealing of how these can create the conditions to accumulate force – if not yet influence policy - in the present, in order for policy gains to be made in the future.

8.3. International economic class relations and political outcomes

Barrington Moore's (1966) method of studying types of class alliances and corresponding political regimes serves as a significant milestone of comparative political-economic history from which many others have drawn (Luebbert, 1990, for instance), and which has also partly inspired this study. However, the above authors observed class relations within countries as self-contained entities, without significantly taking into account core-periphery relations, as argued by Selwyn (2012).

Indeed, when examining the political-economic alliance strategies and policy claims of COPROFAM and ROPPA, one must also observe the tensions introduced by these in relation to wider labour internationalist alliances - despite the fact that these are protracted uphill struggles waged on the scale of decades and threatened by strong pushbacks - in order to understand the underlying strengths and weaknesses, and spaces or impediments to substantive change. The composition of COPROFAM and ROPPA membership ranges from the local subsistence peasantry to the significantly consolidated middle family farmer. But it is united by a common thread of the 'predominance of family labour' (see chapter 6) which places them into a wider category of rural labouring class alliances.

As visually represented in Figure 27 below, these occur between countries of the same region that are part of COPROFAM and ROPPA (South-South labour internationalist class

alliances), but also with progressive allies in the Global North (North-South labour internationalist class alliances), particularly niches of engaged academic researchers and international organisation staff (bilateral cooperation agencies, NGOs). However, differentiating between South-South and North-South is also fundamental. Indeed, many gains for the labouring classes in the Global North have happened at the expense of workers in the Global South, through 'superexploitation' (Marini, 1973) of their labour (see chapter 2). This has happened throughout the different international food regimes examined in this study. For instance, during the first food regime (1870s-1930s), industrialisation in Europe was facilitated by the cheaper outsourcing of grain and meat production to Argentina and Uruguay (see chapter 3), and of peanut and cotton production in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso (see chapter 4): thus, accepting moderate gains for Northern labour entailed increasing the rate of exploitation of labour in the Global South, so as to enable Northern workers to purchase the resulting bread, meat, soap, and clothing at cheaper prices.

This does not of course impede North-South labour internationalist solidarity as manifested in joint struggles, illustrated by the common drafting of global documents like the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests at the CFS, or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants at the HRC (see chapter 1). However, given the overwhelming weight of global monopoly-finance capitalism, it means in practice that these efforts remain mostly *normative*, given that the structures of global governance essentially reflect the balance of political-economic power across different nations and regions of the world. At best, non-binding global governance instruments resulting from North-South labour internationalist alliances serve as fundamental blueprints (as some of the less successful policy demands of COPROFAM and ROPPA in their regions also do) for future constructions. But at worse they are cynically brandished as cosmopolitan fairy tales intended to co-opt and distract the naïve from the mechanisms through which political-economic power is actually exercised.

Hence Amin's (1990) call for delinking, defined as "the submission of external relations [to internal requirements], the opposite of the internal adjustment of the peripheries to the demands of the polarising worldwide expansion of capital" (Saul, 2018:5). This is counterposed to the vain attempts at 'catching up' within the terms of global capitalism through dependent

insertion. Delinking does not imply autarky, which is neither possible nor desirable, but does imply that external economic relations are oriented by the opportunities they offer to an internal market and labour-led strategy. It is therefore a counterpoint to external relations determined by much narrower and shorter term profit opportunities of Northern multinationals, through unconditional opening to foreign direct investment and unequal trade relations.

In this sense, the regional scale is pivotal: on the one hand, it offers the main realistic opportunity for neighbouring peripheral countries to build a sufficient critical mass of interlinked production and consumption by pooling resources from contiguous territories, and through agro-industrialisation strategies that may work with – instead of against – the peasantry and the industry and service workers. On the other hand, however, regional blocs can be turned away from that goal and disoriented by disarticulated class alliances to further pry open a whole region through further deregulation of global capitalism (e.g. via so-called 'WTO plus' North-South regional agreements – including the EU-MERCOSUR and EU-ACP cases examined in chapter 7).

Different types of class alliances are in constant interaction and potential reconfiguration, through competing attempts to enrol ever-wider contingents to their opposing causes. The most pivotal actors are those located at the intersection of two 'grey zones' (see Figure 27 below). The first one is the 'grey zone of regionalism' (following the aforementioned duality between autonomous versus dependent forms of regional integration). The second is the grey zone of so-called 'productive' classes, whose members may at best share enough common interests with the labouring classes to become their allies. This is either because: i) they can be considered part of them, since they predominantly use their own labour force (such as the middle family farmer), or ii) because their employment of formal labour under potentially decent working conditions is combined with a routing of their surplus towards development strategies that correspond to the priorities of national/regional peasant-worker-middle class alliances.

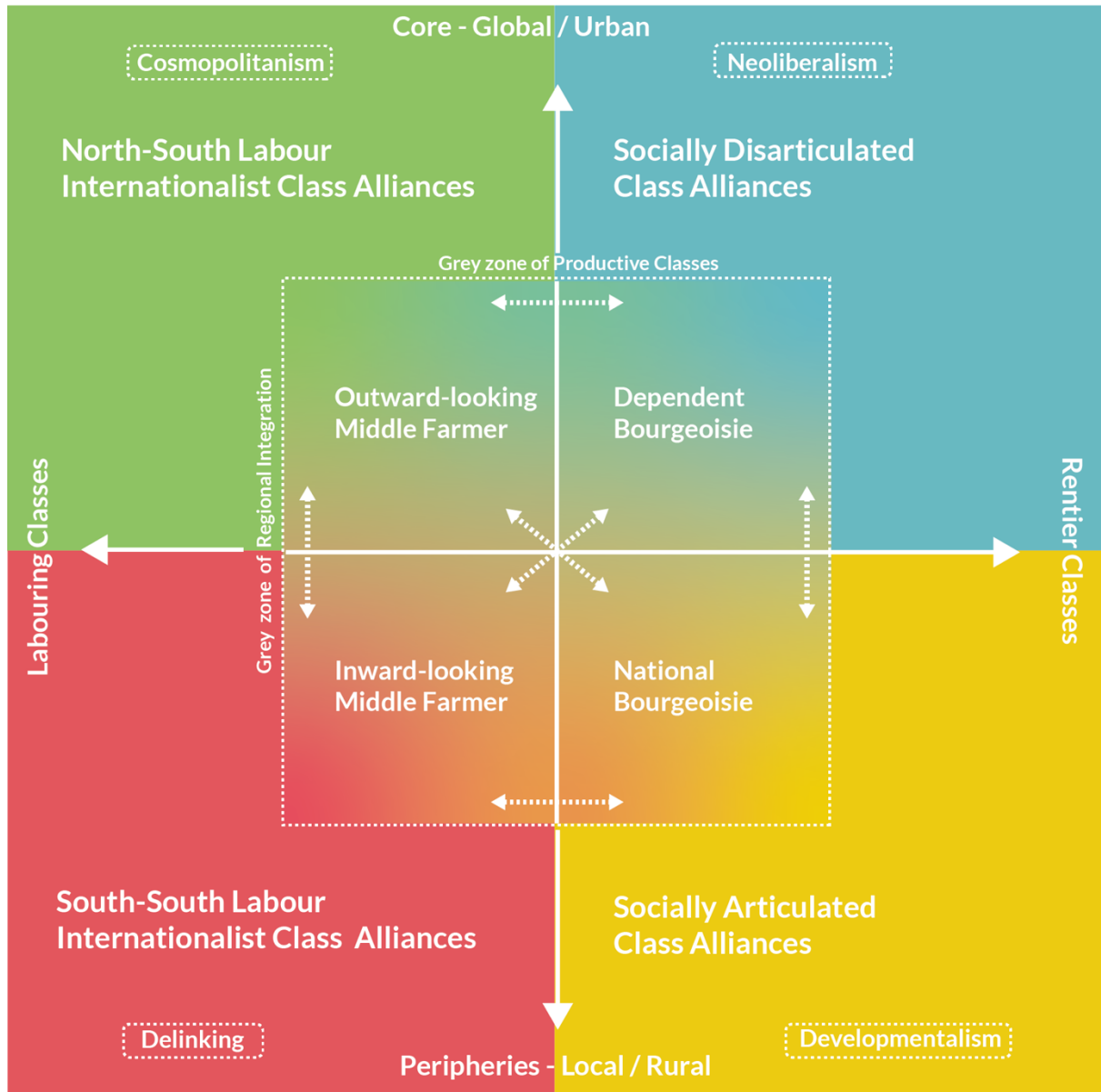


Figure 27: *Typology of shifting class alliances and development paradigms in the global periphery.*⁴⁰⁶

However, just as North-South labour internationalist alliances can only go so far into enabling autonomous labour-led development in the periphery, similar limitations apply to labouring class alliances with their own national/regional industrial and productive sectors of the economy. Indeed, the 'regional grey zone' means that externally-determined economic agendas

⁴⁰⁶ Author's own design. Graphics by Luísa Vieira.

may become more enticing than internally-guided ones, depending on the evolutions of the global conjuncture, but also crucially on the national/regional policy choices that are made by political actors in countries/regions of the South. Hence the importance of policy agency, including that exercised by AOs through invited spaces.

The comparative policy process case studies of chapters 5, 6, and 7 indeed have shown different instances in which: i) middle family farmer members of COPROFAM and ROPPA diverge from the internal-market led development policies favoured by their peasant majority base, in light of the formers' degrees of dependency towards external markets (and failure of national/regional policy to remedy this); ii) 'national bourgeoisies' turning their backs to the 'productive sphere' of capital-labour negotiated strategies, and reaffirming their links with global financialized (i.e. non-productive) capital at the expense of national/regional labour (also as a result of failing national/regional policies and political strategies).

Therefore, the potential progressive or reactionary shifts of pivotal agents such as middle family farmers and national bourgeoisies (represented by the double arrows in Figure 27) are the product not only of shifting external conjunctures, but also of collective national/regional policy agency, as this comparative case study has aimed to demonstrate.

8.4 Replying to the research question: rural *class* alliances, *regional* territories, and *political-economic* policy dialogue

The research question posed in chapter 1 and unpacked in chapter 2 interrogated the conditions under which regional dialogue spaces could catalyse RAOs' agency to influence policies that strengthen PFFs. A fourfold analytical framework was then proposed, whereby AOs' policy agency was premised upon their capacity to unite broad alliances across a region's territories and class fractions, particularly through the use of policy discursive frames in mobilisation and participation strategies. The capacity of AO leaders (and their allies in government, academia, and international organisations) to subjectively formulate and intersubjectively negotiate policy discursive frames that synthesized the diverse (and sometimes conflicting) territorial and class interests of RAO constituencies was submitted as a key condition for invited spaces to catalyse policy influence.

Insights from chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 allow us to now return to the original research question by revisiting its four key pillars identified in chapter 2 (*regional, class, policy, spaces*), which I summarize into three inter-related elements of RAO policy agency: i) diverse rural labouring *class* fractions, ii) from a *region's* different agrarian territories and countries, iii) potentially united by *policy* discursive frames voiced inside government-mediated dialogue and negotiation *spaces*. These three elements are examined individually below, each guided by a 'sub-research question' derived from the original research question posed in chapter 2.

8.4.1 Rural Labouring Classes

Sub-Research Question 1: How do *regional agrarian organisations'* different uses of policy discursive frames enable them to *unite diverse rural labouring class fractions* with competing interests?

South America provides the most convincing answer to this first sub-research question. This is most visible in FAA and CONTAG's agrarian formative paths examined in chapter 3, as well as what Argentina's contemporary regional policy processes tell us. Firstly, Perón's two presidential mandates in the 1940s-1950s (transition from Argentine first to second food regime) represented significant - albeit short-lived - efforts to capture the Pampa's agrarian rent and redistribute it more equitably across the wider rural labouring classes. *Justicialista* party administrations' discursive and policy strategy aimed to unite wage workers and small and medium producers under a common support base. This was done by combining such initiatives as IAPI and the Rural Worker Statute (both in 1947), and a land rental price freeze (1948) after more radical efforts at redistributive agrarian reform were abandoned. Relative gains were crucially enabled by the myriad intersubjective dialogue spaces created by Perón (such as the *Centros de Cooperación Agraria*), in which FAA could negotiate its producer prices with the country's largest public bank without encroaching on rural labourers' wage rises.

Secondly (during Brazil's second food regime in the 1950s-1960s), peasants, wage workers, and small/medium producers united under the banner of 'workers in agriculture' in the creation of an unprecedented national-scale rural labouring class representative confederation - CONTAG. It was born out of the PCB-led ULTAB and Catholic Church youth's Ação Popular efforts

to push for comprehensive redistributive agrarian reform, and subsequent agricultural policies. This occurred with support from João Goulart's PTB government administration, whose Vargas-era commitment to national rural labour class organisation led to Brazil's Rural Worker's Statute (1963). Yet under Brazil's military dictatorship (1964-1985), conservative modernisation of the latifundio on the back of agro-industrial complexes, and the outsourcing of the agrarian question through colonisation schemes in the Amazon and Paraguayan/Bolivian border areas pushed back CONTAG's formative agenda. Southern small and medium producers (who had either benefited from the 1970s rural credit expansion or been left out of it) were bankrupt by the 1980s debt crisis (as in neighbouring Pampayan Argentina and Uruguay). This fuelled the rise of small and medium producer unionisation outside CONTAG (e.g. CUT) and inside it, eventually becoming the hegemonic rural labouring class policy plank, through the 1990s 'family farming' discursive frame. Hence, whether through the term 'peasant' in PCB's ULTAB (1950s), 'workers in agriculture' with CONTAG's creation (1963), or 'family farmers' with the rise of agricultural 'public policies for family farming' (credit, rural extension, insurance, access to markets) as key policy plank - all functioned as self-representative uniting policy discursive frames.

Initially led by FAA, CNFR, and CONTAG's southern federations, COPROFAM's formation as Southern Cone 'family farmers' drew from accumulation narratives largely inspired on Global North previous accumulation trajectories. Backed by productivity evidence (e.g. on family farming's higher productivity per hectare) it emerged as a narrative cristalizing a 'middle family farmer' ideal type which partly allowed for gains to be distributed amongst the wider labouring classes, yet generally still left most undercapitalized peasant majorities outside comprehensive economic support policy coverage.

Productivity-centred legitimising narratives partly gave way to others, more centred on indigenous and traditional peoples' territories (as in REAF's land policy processes from the mid-2010s, seen in chapter 5), rejoining a broader nature, labour, and food sustainability discourse aiming to broaden the South American family farming narrative within its urban middle and working classes. The fragility of all these processes was nonetheless laid bare on many instances, most notably in Argentina's 2008 *Crisis del Campo*, in which Argentina's wider rural labouring classes were torn between dryland, savannah, and subtropical humid peasant majorities and the

substantial temperate zone middle farming minority. Indeed, the latter joined the large-scale agribusiness organisations in the *Mesa de Enlace* to ultimately force the Kirchner administration to back down from a contemporary attempt of sorts to reinstate Perón's 'agrarian rent capture' via export taxation. Still, gains were achieved in terms of indigenous land recognition, and transformation of former state-led policy dialogue space (*e/ FONAF*) into an autonomous peasant and indigenous representative space (*la FONAF*).

8.4.2 The Regional Question: a new National Question?

Sub-Research Questions 2: How do both studied *regional agrarian organisations'* discourse in policy spaces link pan-national narratives with agrarian ones? And how are overlapping *regional territories* represented in these narratives according to their *variable* (agrarian-climatic, linguistic, state) *geometries*?

Another, simpler way, to pose the above second batch of sub-research questions is: how are *agrarian*, *national*, and *democratic* questions intertwined? Indeed, it has been posed by borrowing from Moyo, Jha and Yeros (2013), Moyo and Yeros (2011) and Amin (2011b), and their global historical materialist political economy which places the Global South at its centre.

This thesis has first adopted a long view to examine the formation of regional agrarian organisations (chapters 3 and 4), to later explore (in chapters 5, 6, and 7) the policy discourses on land, labour and trade voiced inside newly built regional participatory dialogue spaces. So long as these regional spaces were mediated by communicatively rational policy analysis and horizontal solidarity networks expected of genuine public spheres, progress was made (at least on paper, if not in practice) in generating convincing alternative policy narratives at the regional level in South America and West Africa.

Yet overall, the West African case provides the most convincing answer to this second sub-question. Several elements demonstrate ROPPA's capacity to reformulate land, labour, and trade policies to address the contemporary *national* question in the Global South. Firstly, this is visible in ROPPA's formation in West Africa, as seen in chapter 4. Indeed, linguistic unity in diversity was used as cultural cohesion factor in ROPPA's formation as 'peasants and agricultural producers' becoming main representatives of West African peasantries at ECOWAS level. Hence,

ROPPA's 13-member country RAO successfully united formerly rival and disconnected colonial zones, even if it was and still remains discursively spearheaded by its francophone members.

Secondly, relatively less land alienation (than elsewhere on the continent, let alone South America) inherited from West Africa's long-rooted and partly enduring pre-colonial distributed agrarian structure relates in contemporary terms to lesser degrees of cultural alienation in its rural areas, and therefore greater 'national (or regional) consciousness' (Fanon, 2002).⁴⁰⁷ Admittedly, this does not erase the persistence of subjection patterns, whether inherited from colonial 'bureaucratic-populist' (Chauveau, 1994) forms of dependent political-economic international insertion, or in the social reproduction of exploitation patterns derived from customary patriarchal 'semi-feudal' social relations.

Indeed, relatively untouched *économie de traite* surplus absorption patterns have been reproduced to this day through France's neocolonial and economically-paternalist relationships with its former West African colonies, most glaringly via UEMOA countries' monetary tutelage of the CFA franc by the *Banque de France* (Nubukpo et al., 2006). Yet the shift in West Africa's regional agrarian policy processes from francophone regional zone (UEMOA) to pan-West African regional integration process suggest an ongoing slow, perhaps decades-long, transition from France to Nigeria as main regional political-economic hegemon. This has been partly facilitated by a wider margin for political-economic manoeuvre brought into the international system mainly with the rise of China – and, more generally, via diversification of African trade with a larger pool of partners (mostly located in Asia) in the last few decades.

The demographics of the largest food consumer market, with most of the world's population (East, South, and Southeast Asia) will inevitably affect future food regimes. The fact that one of the world's largest international commodity trade flows in volume and value is soya export from MERCOSUR countries to China (Chatham House, 2020), means that current evolutions in international food systems will necessarily influence and also be influenced by regional agrarian patterns in South America's Southern Cone (which exports 2/3 of global soya beans).

⁴⁰⁷ Such relationships have been well explored e.g. by Isaacman (1990).

8.4.3 Global Food Regimes and Regional Agrarian Policy Influence

Sub-Research Question 3: How does the 'global policy public sphere' reflect the balance of regional class and core-periphery forces under the present (post-1970s) international food regime?

Findings from the comparison of both regions are illustrative of the continuing and overwhelming power of global monopoly-finance capital (Sweezy, 1994) to impose neoliberal policy hegemony on a world-scale through the contemporary 'corporate' (McMichael, 2012) food regime. Yet in both South America and West Africa, post-1990s democratic regimes in the Global South have opened spaces for meaningful regional participatory policy deliberation, which at the very least discursively challenges that hegemony.

Under the present Global North-led food regime the labouring majorities in countries housing 85% of the world's population undoubtedly are still by and large submitted to core-periphery super-exploitation by a tiny minority within countries housing the remaining 15% (and their dependent allies of circumstance in the Global South). Nevertheless, trends regarding the rise of RAOs' representative discourse and intersubjective policy negotiation capacities in two different regions of the Global South appear to point towards a long-term relative decline of Global North-centred *policy narratives* on land, labour and trade - even if this is seldom matched by equivalent *budgetary allocations* from Global South treasuries.

These have had to contend with alternative South American and West African rural labouring class discourses, based on COPROFAM and ROPPA's representation of policy interests at the three levels of transborder agrarian territories, neighbouring nations, and regional blocs. Hence, RAOs' capacities to negotiate policy outcomes have contributed to at least partially rebalance SA and WA agrarian policy discourse. Yet, large-scale agribusiness-led narratives largely continue to determine the bulk of agricultural policy budgets. Nevertheless, if PFF resilience and AOs' cumulative buildup of political agency witnessed in their century-long formation processes (seen in chapters 3 and 4) are reliable indicators, and if trends towards greater regional policy influence (seen in chapters 5, 6, and 7) persist in the next few decades, current shifts in regional land, labour, and trade policy discourse – as influenced by COPROFAM

and ROPPA in recent decades – may indeed enable to more democratically channel agrarian rents towards sustained investment in PFF within their respective regions, and perhaps elsewhere.

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ANNEX 1. INTERVIEWEE CODES

AO = AGRARIAN ORGANISATION	
CS = CIVIL SERVANT	
AR = ACADEMIC RESEARCHER	
IR = INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION STAFF	
SA = SOUTH AMERICA	
WA = WEST AFRICA	
INTERVIEW DATE/LOCATION	CODE
2016	
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA1
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA2
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA3
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA4
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA5
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA6
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	IR-SA1
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA7
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA8
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA9
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	AO-SA1
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA10
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	AO-SA2
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA11
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA12
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	CS-SA13
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	AO-SA3
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	IR-SA2
SOUTH AMERICA NOV-DEC	IR-SA3
BRIGHTON DEC	AR-WA1

INTERVIEW DATE/LOCATION	CODE
WEST AFRICA - JUN	AO-WA1
WEST AFRICA - JUN	AO-WA2
WEST AFRICA - JUN	AO-WA3
WEST AFRICA - JUN	AO-WA4
WEST AFRICA - JUN	AO-WA5
WEST AFRICA - JUN	CS-WA1
WEST AFRICA - JUN	CS-WA2
WEST AFRICA - JUN	AO-WA6
WEST AFRICA - JUN	IR-WA1
WEST AFRICA - JUN	CS-WA3
WEST AFRICA - JUN	CS-WA4
WEST AFRICA - JUN	AR-WA2
WEST AFRICA - JUN	IR-WA2
WEST AFRICA - JUL	AO-WA7
WEST AFRICA - JUL	IR-WA3
WEST AFRICA - JUL	IR-WA4
WEST AFRICA - JUL	AR-WA3
WEST AFRICA - JUL	AO-WA8
WEST AFRICA - JUL	AO-WA9
WEST AFRICA - JUL	IR-WA5
WEST AFRICA - AUG	AR-WA4
WEST AFRICA - AUG	CS-WA5
WEST AFRICA - AUG	AR-WA5
WEST AFRICA - AUG	AO-WA10
WEST AFRICA - AUG	CS-WA6
WEST AFRICA - AUG	AO-WA11
WEST AFRICA - AUG	AO-WA12
WEST AFRICA - AUG	CS-WA7
WEST AFRICA - AUG	CS-WA8
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA13
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA14
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA15
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA16
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA17
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA18
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA19
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA20
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA21
WEST AFRICA - SEP	AO-WA22
WEST AFRICA - SEP	CS-WA9

INTERVIEW DATE/LOCATION	CODE
2017	
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AO-SA4
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AO-SA5
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AO-SA6
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA14
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA15
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA16
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AO-SA7
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA17
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA18
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA19
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA20
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA21
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA22
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA23
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA24
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AO-SA8
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA25
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AO-SA9
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AO-SA10
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA26
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA27
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	AR-SA1
SOUTH AMERICA - NOV-DEC	CS-SA28